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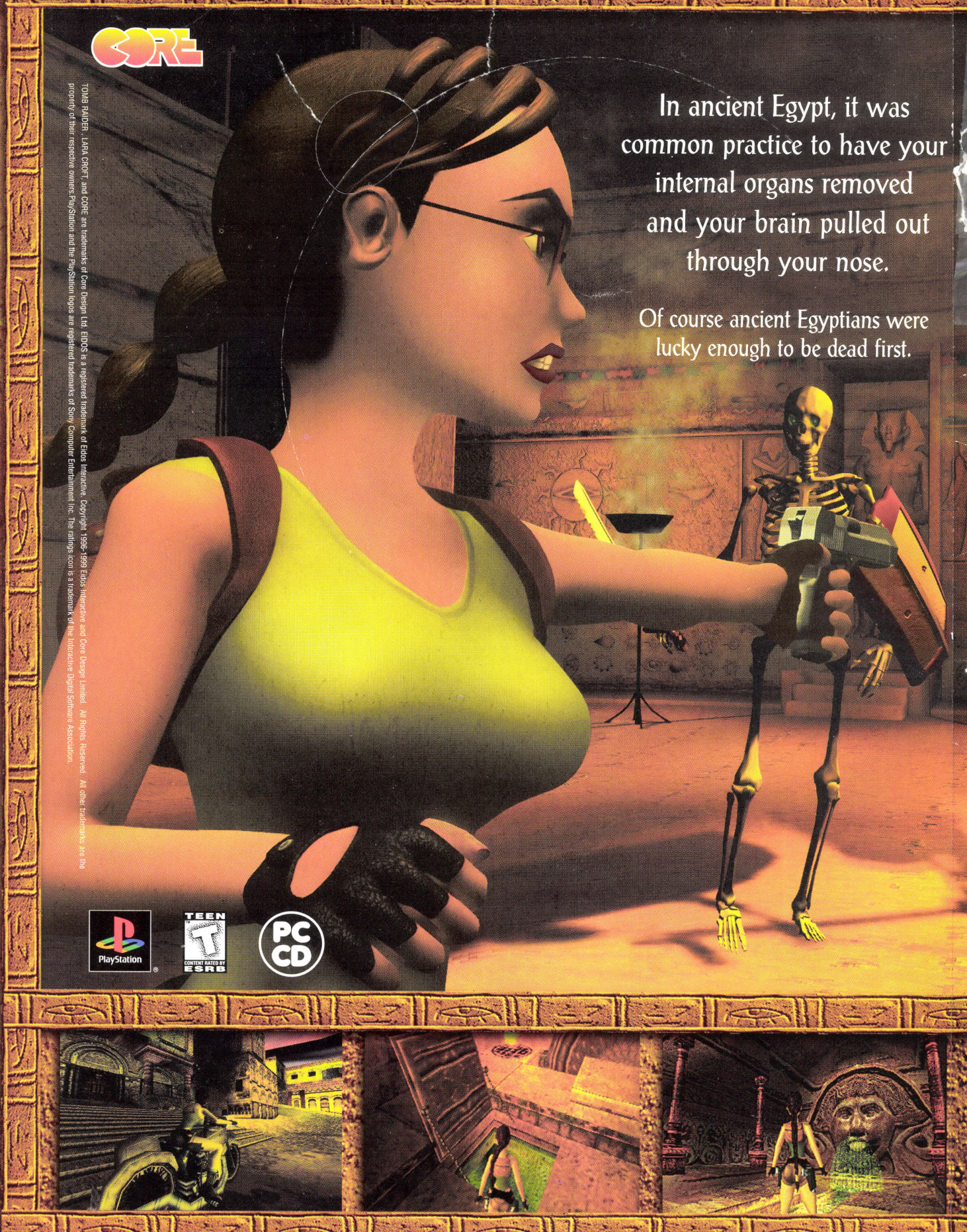


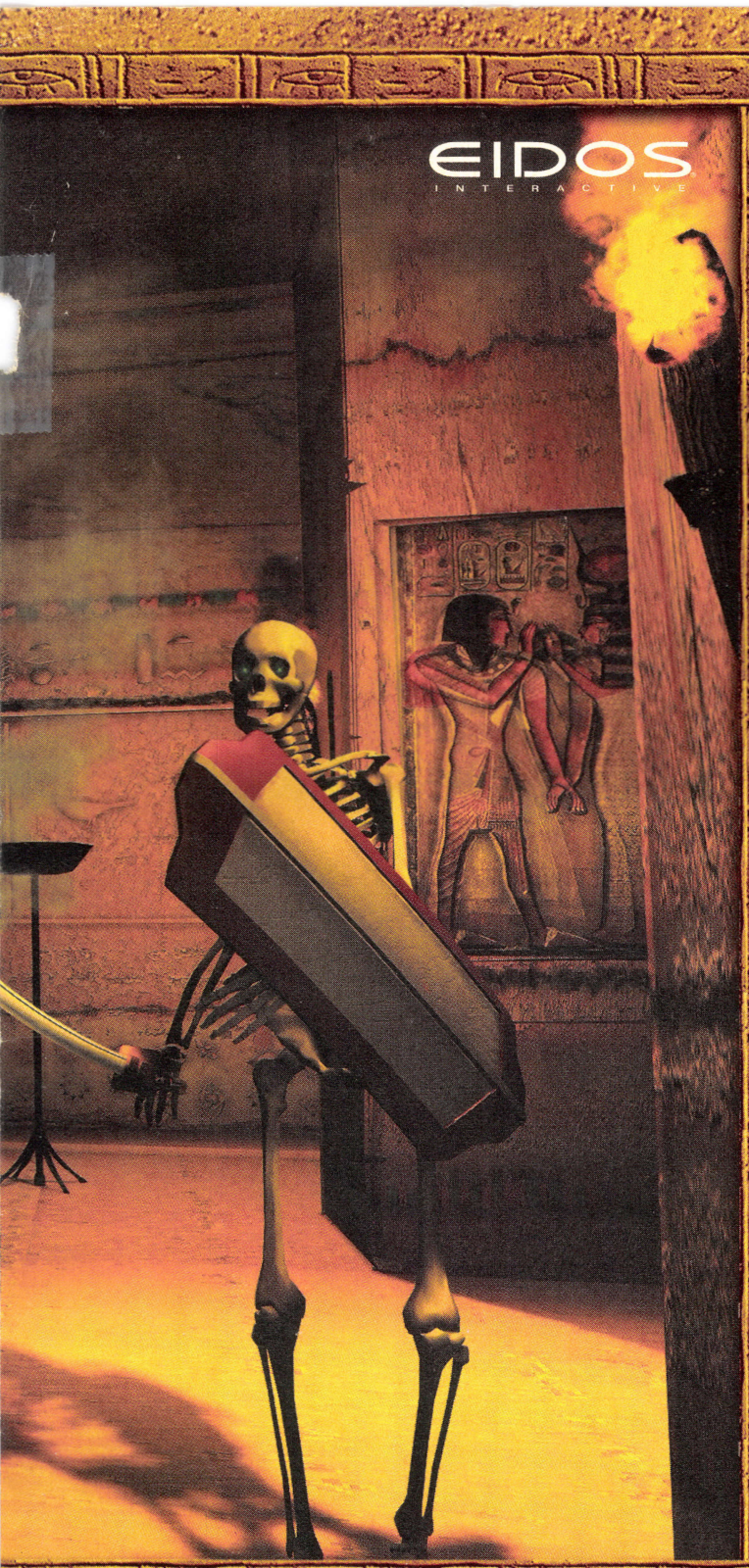
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CORE
In ancient Egypt, it was common practice to have your internal organs removed and your brain pulled out through your nose.
Of course ancient Egyptians were lucky enough to be dead first.
PlayStation
TEEN
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
PC CD
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Could the next tomb Lara Croft enters be her own? Find out in Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation, her latest adventure. With seamlessly integrated gameplay and FMV sequences, new skin and 3-D texture mapping, diabolical new puzzles and a totally new inventory control system this is a totally new Tomb Raider. Let's just hope it's not Lara's last.

TOMB RAIDER
THE LAST REVELATION

tombraider.com



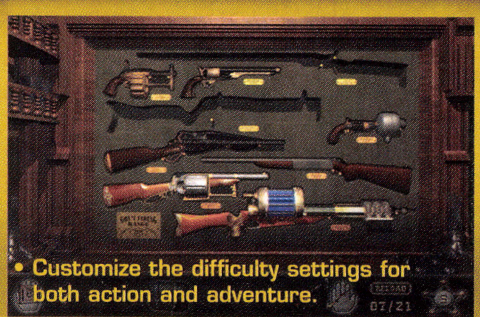




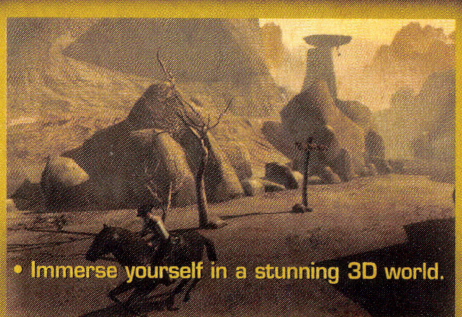
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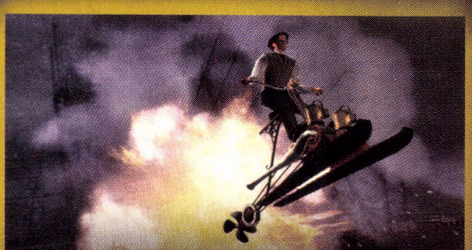
ONCE YOU GO WEST

James West.
He could out-shoot any marksman and out-think any mastermind. Now you can put on his holster, tilt your hat to the horizon and start an all new mission in the Wild Wild West.

Your gun play has to be quick—and your mind even quicker—as you race to uncover a plot to assassinate the President. Play the parts of James West and Artemus Gordon and get into predicaments as wild as their personalities.

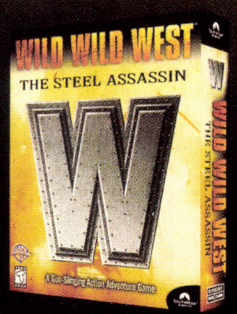
So if you think you're ready to tame the new frontier, then reach for your six-shooter, muster up your courage and go West!

WILD WILD WEST
THE STEEL ASSASSIN

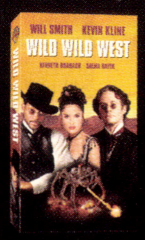


- Challenging missions for both James West and Artemis Gordon

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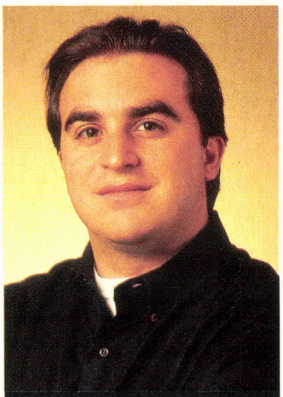
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SOUTHPEAK™ INTERACTIVE

Team Talk

Comments, suggestions? Send any feedback to: letters@incitepcgaming.com.

Sometimes I want a game that lets me kick my feet up, enjoy the great dialogue, and use my noggin, not my reflexes.



Tasos Kaiafas EIC

While the adventure-game genre once seemed doomed, I'm glad to see that some developers and, more importantly, some publishers refuse to give up on it. Right now, I'm enthralled by *Gabriel Knight III*. Like a good book, it's hard to put down. Jane Jensen, the game's writer and designer, is one of the best in the business, and I hope that her publisher, Sierra, will support her in making a fourth installment in the series.

I'm sure LucasArts is behind its great adventure-game designer, Tim Schafer, the creator of *Grim Fandango*, for another title. No matter how long it takes for his next masterpiece, it will be too long.

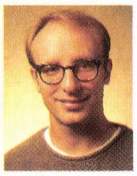
What I love about adventure games is their relaxing pace. After a hectic day of running this magazine, I like to escape within a great game, but sometimes I want a game that lets me kick my feet up, enjoy the great dialogue, and use my noggin, not my reflexes.

Seeing how it's almost Valentine's Day, you might consider sharing one of these adventures with your dearest. Unlike most other games in which the person manning the controls has the most fun, two players can enjoy adventure games.

At the other end of the gaming spectrum, I'm also glad to see the return of the monster-laden shooter in *KISS: Psycho Circus The Nightmare Child*. Sure, I enjoyed the strategy of *Half-Life*, but sometimes I feel like unwinding by mowing down a room filled with hundreds of nasty critters. I think a lot of action-game fans have missed that since the *Doom* days.

So enjoy the huge *Kiss: Psycho Circus The Nightmare Child* preview in this issue. And enjoy Valentine's Day my way. You won't even have to give up a night of gaming to satisfy your lady.

Meet the Editorial Team



Joe Vallina
Deputy EIC

Joe got his first KISS album at 10, and then he conned his dad into buying him a Les Paul just like Ace's. He can almost play "Parasite" now.



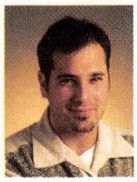
Nikki Douglas
Senior Editor

Nikki made about 1,000 kids in her theme park barf until we had to insist that she let the little buggers off the ride. So she made another one.



Gary Eng Walk
Senior Editor

Gary has a nose for news. He also has about four thousand photos of the New York Yankees in his office cube. Ummm... season's over, dude.



Darren Gladstone
Senior Editor

Darren became a hardware editor after his audition for the part of Mini-Me fell through last year.



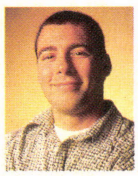
Steve Klett
Senior Editor

Steve lives in beautiful Colorado, although we occasionally drag him out to San Francisco and make him go to game company parties. Tough life, huh?



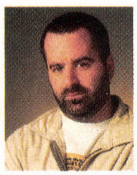
William O'Neal
Senior Editor

Wil lost half of the skin on his face and broke his arm in a recent BMX accident, but that didn't stop him from burning up Las Vegas at Comdex. Nice.



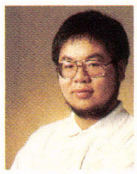
Dave Rees
Multimedia Editor

Dave is a die-hard Pittsburgh Steelers fan, although he hates to admit it this season.



Paul Semel
Entertainment Editor

Paul gets to meet rock stars and supermodels on a regular basis. He rubs this in whenever he can.



Di Luo
Editorial Assistant

On more occasions than we want to know about, Di has pulled 24-hour shifts to make Test Centers.

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PC CD-ROM

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Chris Sawyer

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DIABLO II™

Vengeance Was Only The Beginning

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KISS Psycho Circus The Nightmare Child 54

The greatest rock and roll show on the planet is coming to your PC in the form of *KISS Psycho Circus The Nightmare Child*. This first-person shooter from Third Law Interactive and the Gathering of Developers is taking first-person shooters back to the days of pure and simple shoot-'em-ups. We get the scoop on the game straight from the guys that are putting the whole thing together at Third Law Interactive. Plus, we've got the only screenshots anywhere of the computer-generated renders of every band member. Get ready to rock and roll all night!

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Singer Bruce Dickenson talks to *incite PC Gaming* about getting back together with the band and how their new PC game, *Ed Hunter*, came about.

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KISS Psycho Circus The Nightmare Child

Check out our exclusive shots of the whole band!



PHOTO BY RAJAT GHOSH

FEATURED IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE



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Iron Maiden Breaks Into Computer Games

Dope Deathmatch 74

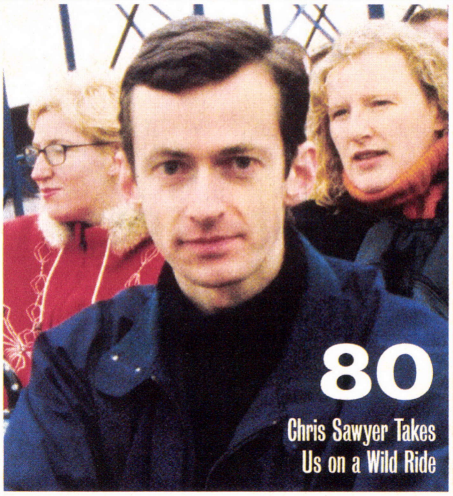
What happens when you get a hard-core metal band in the game lab to deathmatch against each other in *Unreal Tournament?* Pure and total carnage, that's what.

Chris Sawyer Interview 80

Chris Sawyer, the creator of *Roller Coaster Tycoon,* enjoys riding, building, and simulating roller coasters...he likes it a lot, actually. We find out what drives his obsession with dips, whirls, and speed.

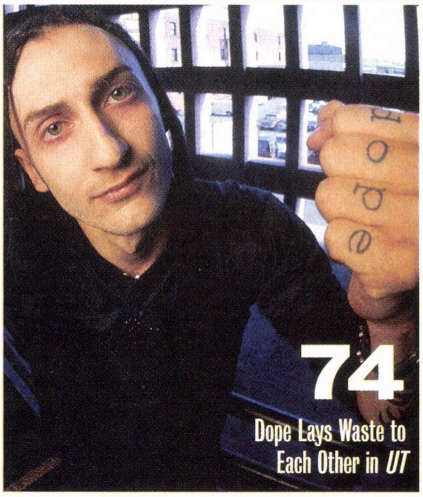
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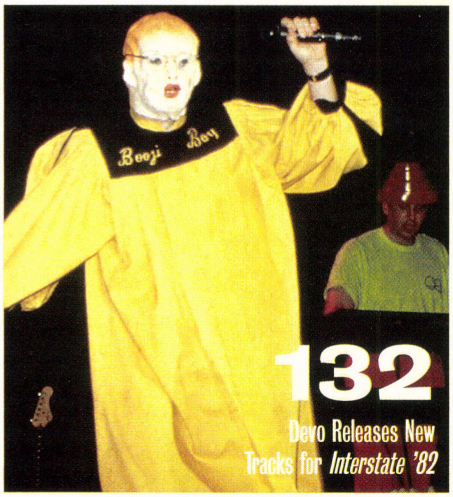
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PHOTO BY RAJAT GHOSH

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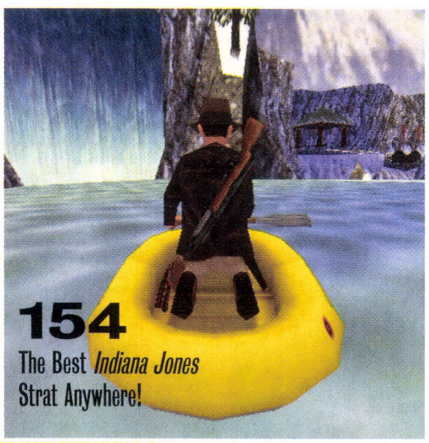
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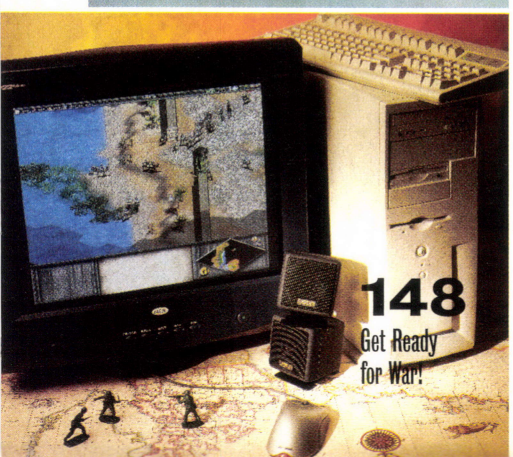
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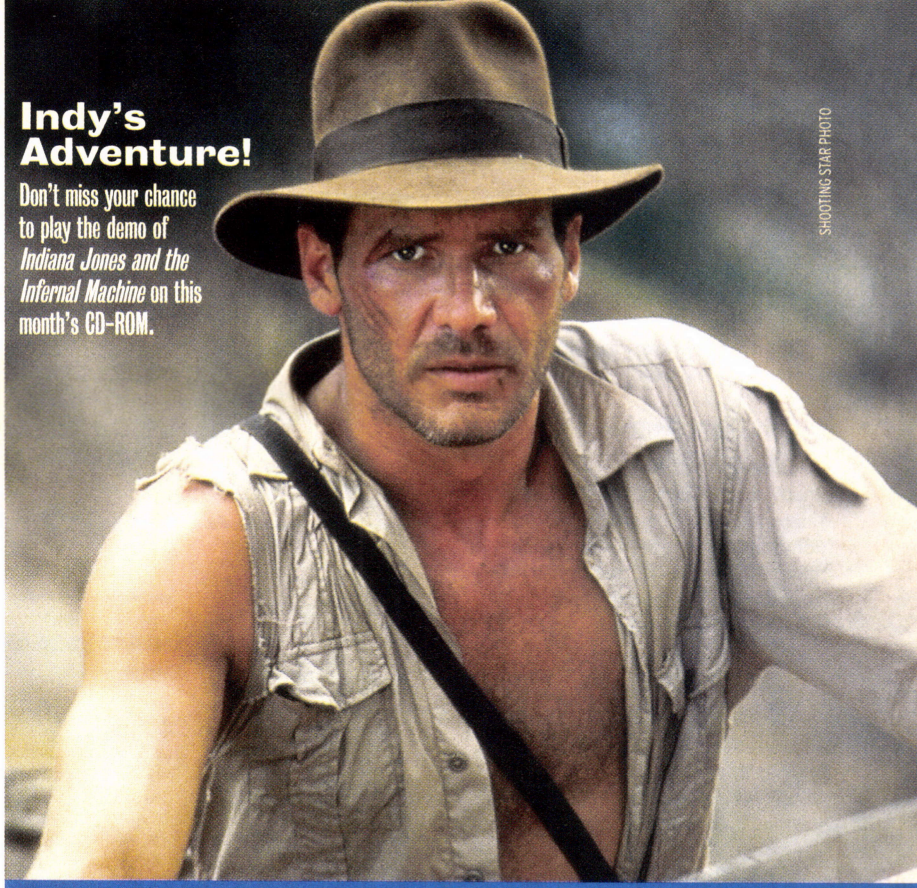
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ON THE incite CD-ROM

The ***incite CD-ROM*** brings you the best interviews, videos, and game demos on the planet in every issue of *incite PC Gaming*.

This month's main feature video is *KISS Psycho Circus The Nightmare Child*. You won't believe your eyes when you boot up this cool video.

But how do you get the damn CD out of the cover without totally destroying it in the process? Simple. Just peel back the handy-dandy access flap on the inside of the front cover and—*bingo!*—out comes the *incite CD-ROM*!

Here's what you'll find on the disc this month:

PLAYABLE DEMOS

Indiana Jones: Infernal Machine
Get ready to do some serious adventuring—Indy style!

The Wheel of Time
Play the new Robert Jordan-inspired action game.

Sid Meier's Antietam!
Civil War combat like you've never seen before.

Close Combat IV
Real-time WWII combat at the Battle of the Bulge.

Star Trek: Hidden Evil
Get ready for some pure evil on the PC!

Messiah
Become a malicious little cherub in this cool title.

Nerf Arena Blast
A fun, non-lethal deathmatch for the entire family.

VIDEOS

KISS Psycho Circus Nightmare Child
Find out the real story behind the new KISS game!

GeForce
Check out this new 3D chip from nVidia.

Heavy Metal: F.A.K.K. 2
Nothing is as hot and steamy as *Heavy Metal*!

Electric Playground
We've teamed up with *EP* to bring you this report.

TOOLBOX

Tweaks
What are tweaks, anyway? Tweaks, in a nutshell, are applications that modify your favorite games to make them run more smoothly and look better. You just open the Tweak window, check the options you want, and bingo! Your game runs faster.

Drivers, Patches, Gamespy, Rio
We've got all the drivers and patches for the games you want to play. We also include the front end for the deathmatch service Gamespy and the Rio MP3 player so you don't have to download them.

Having problems with your CD-ROM? Please let us know and we'll help you fix it or replace it for free. Email us at **cdsupport@incitepcgaming.com** or send a letter to **incite PC Gaming, 650 Townsend St., Suite 305, San Francisco, CA 94103.**

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Not sure if *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation* is the game for you? Download the demo from our fast and reliable **Download** section and take it for a spin before you buy.





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Spill Yer Guts!

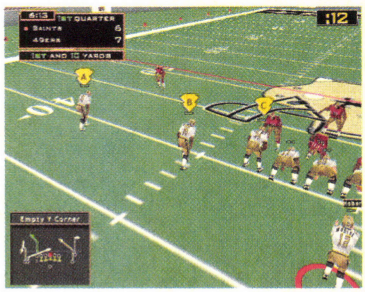
Got a burning question you need answered? Want a gaming matter cleared up once and for all? Need to vent some bile? We'll accept any and all of your thoughts. This, your letters forum, is the place to shout. Send all intelligent missives to: **incite PC Gaming Magazine, 650 Townsend, Suite 305, San Francisco, CA 94103 USA**. Alternatively, put finger to keyboard, and type to us via email at **letters@incitepcgaming.com**.

LETTERS FROM READERS

Tough Customer

Armed with the confidence I gained from reading your review of *NFL Fever 2000* in your December issue, I scraped up 20 bucks and went out and bought the game. I was influenced by quotes such as "The best damn PC football game ever" and "The most realistic football game we've ever seen." I was impressed right away with the straightforward interface, but when I received the opening kickoff, something strange happened. My kickoff returner was virtually immune from being caught and tackled! He ran all the way to the opposing team's three-yard line, looped around the field again clockwise, and then scored a touchdown. At that moment I quit and uninstalled the game, then repackaged it convincingly enough to return it for a refund. "The best damn PC football game ever?" I don't think so. That title would have to belong to *Madden 99* (or maybe the old *Tecmo Bowl 3*).

Dan
Indianapolis, IN



FOOTBALL? FOOEY! Good thing we played *NFL Fever 2000* for more than one play.

Grateful Low-end PC Gamer

I was very pleased to pick up a new PC gaming magazine today. I usually pick them up just to look at the games I wish I could afford to play. I own a Pentium 166 computer, and magazine CD-ROM demos are not always kind to me, because I can only play one or two of the games they contain. This is why I was very excited to read Joe Vallina's piece "Fight the Power—10 Great Pentium 133 Games." You guys made my day! You provide some hope for us who can't afford all the upgrades and the headaches. Thank you very much!

Marc Lessard
Via the Internet

How Dare You!

So you thought it would be fun and cheeky to do a sugar-fuelled, candy-assed rip-off of the most whacked-out writer in history, complete with cutey [sic] photos of two dumb freaks pansying [sic] around in shirts, shades, and smokes. ["Fear, Loathing, and *Descent 3*," December, 1999] And oh, how novel. It's a review of a *computer game convention*? Give me a break. If I wanted to read a tongue-in-cheek commentary of Las Vegas I would go back to the original Gonzo himself, not some pale computer geek facsimile, who's too stiff and naive to mention anything harder than Jolt, Pixy Stix, or Pop Rocks. Besides, half your audience won't understand. They're too young and naive themselves to get your lofty joke. If you're still wondering where your reporting team is, those two undernourished Hawaiian-shirted losers calling themselves Duke and Dr. Gonzo, I'd check in the lock-up on Owl Farm in Colorado. If I was Raoul Duke, that's where I would have stashed those morons. I hope Hunter S. Thompson sues your ass.

Judy Gaudess
Via the Internet

Sorry for trying to be creative. We didn't think we would upset any of Mr. Thompson's fans. I guess you must take his work quite seriously, huh? Maybe we should have parodied Dr. Seuss instead. That would have more appeal to our young and naive audience, don't you think? (Besides, Dr. Seuss is dead so he can't sue us.) However, you're wrong about our undernourished editors. Didn't you see Dr. Gonzo's gut in the photograph? We make sure he gets a regular diet of barley, malt, hops, and cheeseburgers.



One Chip Can Turn One Second Of Gaming Into

ONE HELLISH NIGHTMARE!

Today's game opponents are tougher to beat. So we're issuing you an unrivaled weapon. The new Viper II graphics card is equipped with 4X AGP power and a transformation and lighting engine for the most realistic images ever. Better yet, Viper II now features S3TC texture compression, which hurls up to 15 million triangles at your monitor every second for the most intense 3D action ever. Make your screen image come alive. Unless, of course, you'd prefer to make them otherwise.



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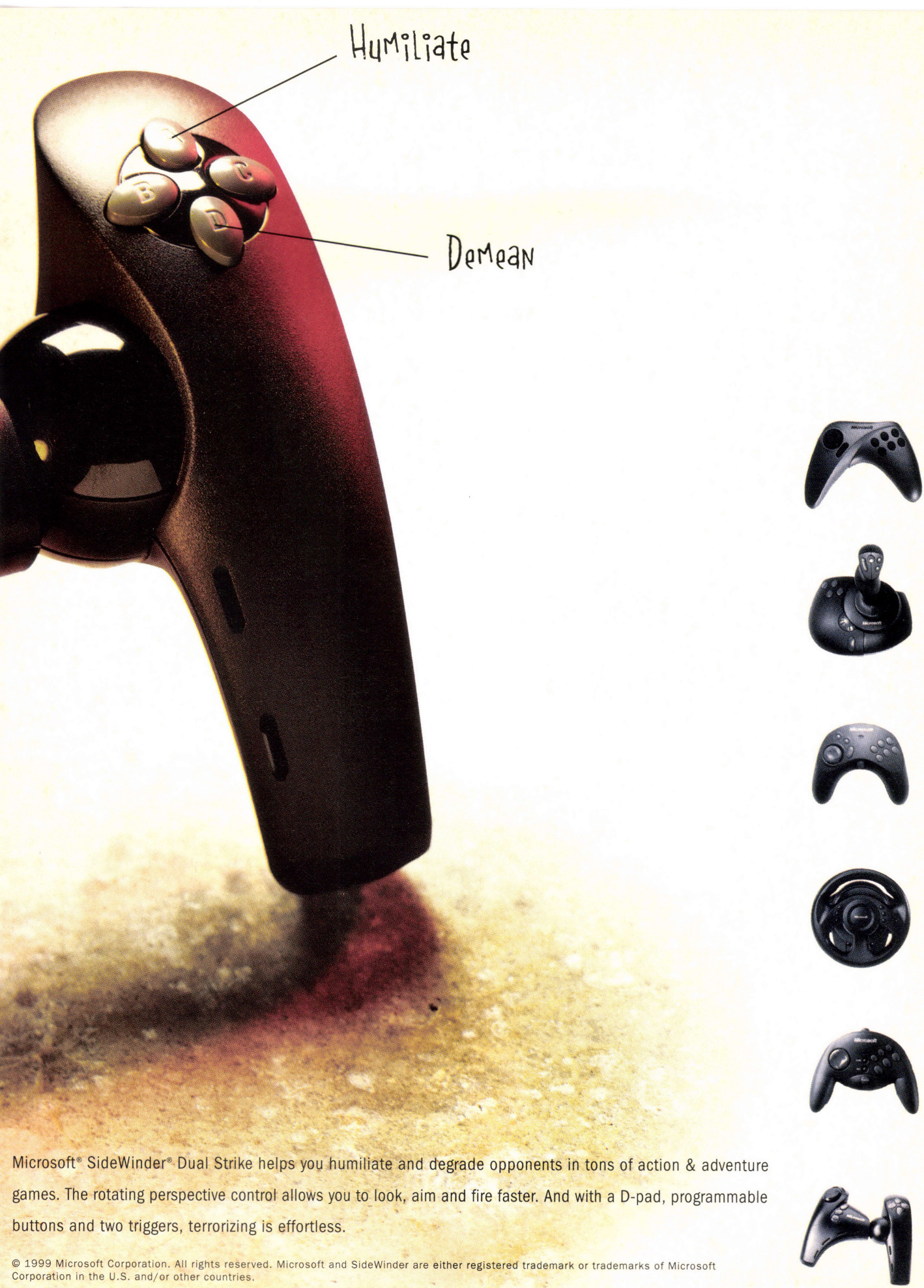

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Lights, Camera, Action Games!

Game Companies Are Crying "Hooray for Hollywood" More Than Ever

Film buffs aren't the only ones flocking to the movies in record droves. Interactive software companies are snatching up the rights to produce titles based on some of the big screen's most recognizable movie franchises.

In what some would call a Bonding agreement, Electronic Arts and MGM announced a partnership in which EA would have exclusive rights to develop games based on 007. Meanwhile, Take-Two Interactive and New Line Cinema inked a deal of their own that gives Take-Two an exclusive, four-year window to develop games featuring the big screen's other world-renown womanizing spy, Austin "Danger" Powers.

EA has Bond and Take-Two has Austin Powers. Which game company will win the race to snatch up *The Matrix* franchise?

PC gamers shouldn't be discouraged by the fact that EA's first Bond title, *Tomorrow Never Dies*, (released last November) was available only for the PlayStation. That game was part of a previous arrangement with MGM Interactive.

Under the current deal, EA acknowledged that PC owners will also get to play a fair share of Bond games. While the exact titles are still unknown, you can count on a game based on the current Bond blockbuster, *The World is Not Enough* (we hear it'll use the *Quake III* engine), plus a rumored racing game that features gadget guru Q's most tricked-out autos.

Details are even more hazy with Take-Two's future *Austin Powers* titles, except for the fact that there will definitely be shagadelic games available for the PC. The first and only *Austin Powers* game so far has been last year's *Operation: Trivia*, released by Sierra, so the field is wide open (a Mini-Me/Fat Bastard third-person shooter, perhaps?)

One thing that these game





SHOOTING STAR PHOTO

A CHRISTMAS TO REMEMBER Forget Pierce Brosnan: Denise Richards' Dr. Christmas Jones character needs an adventure all to herself.

WHO OWNS WHAT NOW?



SHOOTING STAR PHOTO

IS THERE A DR. ZAIUS IN THE HOUSE? Fox's *Planet of the Apes* game is due this spring.

These days you need a scorecard to keep track of which game company owns which movie license. Here's the lowdown so far:

Activision, Interplay, Simon & Schuster: Star Trek
LucasArts: Star Wars, Indiana Jones
Take-Two Interactive: Austin Powers
Electronic Arts: James Bond
Gathering of Developers: The Blair Witch Project
Southpeak Interactive: Men in Black, Wild Wild West
Dreamworks Interactive (published by EA)**:** Jurassic Park
Fox Interactive: Die-Hard, Planet of the Apes



WILD WILD PESTS Southpeak has cornered the market on games with Will Smith in them.



GLOBE PHOTOS

IVANNA AUSTIN POWERS CD-ROM! Let's hope Take-Two gives it plenty of mojo.

companies might be forgetting: film-based computer games have a long history of money-losing, creative bombs. Don't they remember *Johnny Mneumonic*, or more recently, *Braveheart*? Still, it's hard to ignore the dollar signs: the *Austin Powers* franchise has raked in more than *550 meeeellion dollars* worldwide.

The deal-making between movie studios and software companies isn't even close to being over: Still up for grabs to the highest bidder is the right to make games based on the monster sci-fi hit *The Matrix*. Companies in the running include Shiny Entertainment, Activision, and Electronic Arts.

Hot and Cold

Let's Bring Out the Thermometer to Gauge the Latest Happenings in the Game Industry

212°F BOILING

PIPING

The Golden Age of Fragging
The troika of first-person shooters–*Quake III: Arena, Unreal Tournament,* and *Half-Life Opposing Force*–are out in full bloom, leaving fans scrambling to find time to play 'em all.

Rainbow Six: The Movie
Paramount Pictures has hired Michael Schiffer *(The Peacemaker, Crimson Tide)* to pen the script.

AMD Tops Out at 750MHz
Chipmaker AMD's 750MHz Athlon processor has started appearing in new personal computers.

TEPID

Electronic Arts Cuts a Deal With America Online
EA will become AOL's exclusive online game provider. "You've got latency!"

***Diablo II* Misses Out on Christmas**
They gave it their best shot, but the folks over at Blizzard just couldn't make the cut-off date for the Holiday buying season.



32°F FREEZING

GLOBE PHOTOS



ARMED AND DANGEROUS Bruce Campbell returns to kick demon ass in *Evil Dead: Ashes 2.*

Back From the Dead!

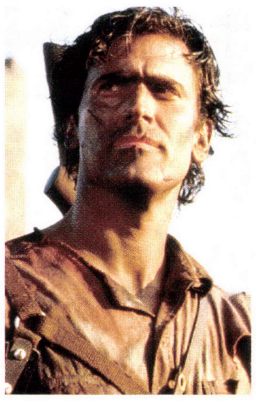
The Horror Movie Trilogy Rises From Obilivion in Style With a New Adventure Game From THQ

EVIL DEAD IS alive and well. THQ is developing a CD-ROM title focusing on the horror movie cult classic, which ended its trilogy with 1993's *Army of Darkness.*

The game, *Evil Dead: Ashes 2,* takes place eight years after *Army of Darkness.* Ash Williams, the series' hero (star Bruce Campbell supplies the voiceovers), returns for this story, as does the Necronomicon, aka the Book of the Dead.

Expect lots of *Tomb Raider*-style elements of exploration and puzzle-solving at the forefront, and of course, more than enough gore to keep things scary.

It's still unclear what weapons will be at your disposal as you battle the worst the Necronomicon has to offer, but it's a safe bet that Ash's handy-dandy chainsaw will be present and accounted for. It's time to die...again.



DEAD MAN Bruce Campbell warms up his voice for the game.

Blockbuster Games

The Video Rental Chain Gives Games a Try

Even though the Nintendo and PlayStation crowd has been able to rent console games as easily as the latest slasher movie, PC gamers have never been able to make it a Blockbuster night...until now.

The ubiquitous video store chain is making PC CD-ROMs available for rental in 14 major cities, including New York, Miami, San Francisco, and Chicago.

If customers want to rent a game beyond the initial five-day period, they have the option of buying "e-tokens," which extend the rental or purchase the game outright. E-tokens will be available for purchase online, so if you like the game, you don't even need to leave the house to keep it.

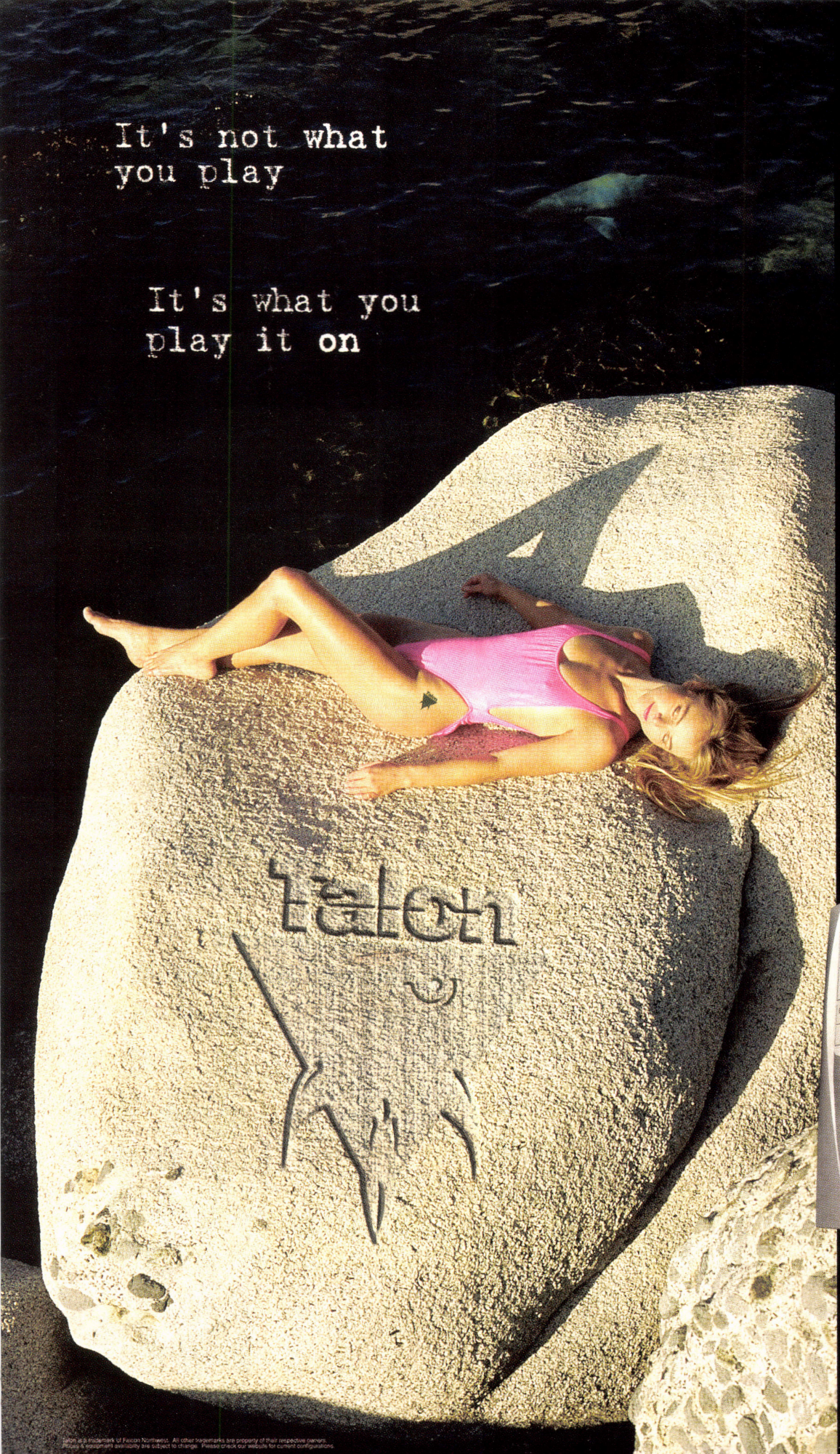
PC gamers have never been able to make it a Blockbuster night...until now.

There's one main reason why Blockbuster's PC rental plan might go down in flames: PC game demos. Available from game publisher's Web sites (or from *incite PC Gaming's* own CD-ROM), demos do everything that a theoretical rental at Blockbuster is meant to do: give the player tastes of games that they have an interest in buying.

Blockbuster is also experimenting with full-fledged game stores. Called Blockbuster Games, the outlets have started appearing in Calgary, Canada and feature "play before you pay" kiosks for gamers who wish to test-drive rentals.



RENT ME OR DIE Pretty soon you might be able to go down to the local video store and come back with *Rainbow Six.*



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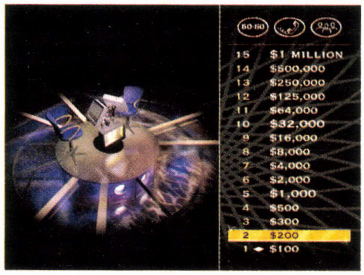
Win A Zillion, er...Million

Who Wants to Be a Millionaire? Comes to the PC

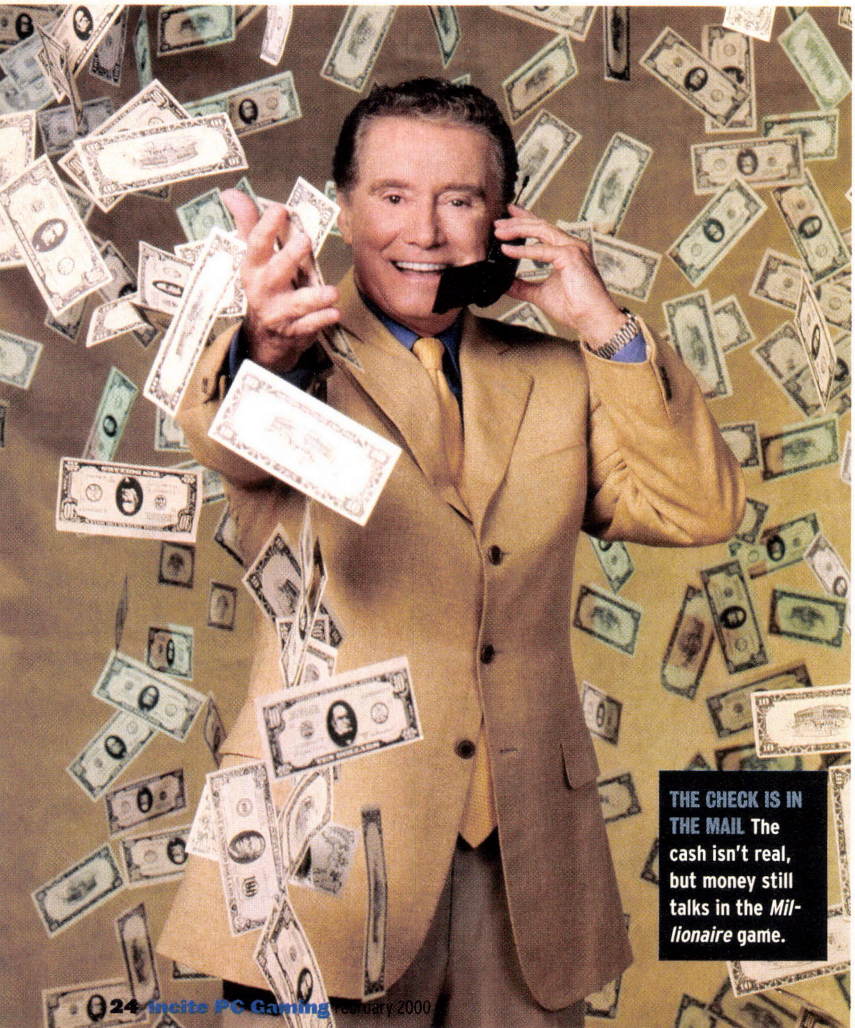
If you keep missing your chance to earn serious game-show dinero on ABC's hit *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, you're not alone. Only a handful of contestant hopefuls actually make it to the coveted Hot Seat opposite host Regis Philbin. Everyone else itching to give Reege their "final answer" will have to settle for winning a million virtual dollars on Disney Interactive's new CD-ROM, which brings the addictive trivia-fest from prime time to your computer screen.

Everything's all here, from the cheesy, melodramatic theme song to the contestant-saving lifelines. The early $100 questions, however, aren't the giveaways they are on TV. Don't be surprised when you're stumped by your very first question. Or when Reege starts talking trash: Jellyvision, the developer behind the edgy *You Don't Know Jack* series, designed the game, so Regis taunts you if you lose. And the name he forces upon you if you take too long to type your own in at the beginning? Kathie Lee.

Ouch—maybe you really *don't* want to be a millionaire.



IS THAT YOUR FINAL ANSWER? If it wasn't my frickin' final answer, why would I say it?



THE CHECK IS IN THE MAIL The cash isn't real, but money still talks in the *Millionaire* game.

PHOTO COURTESY OF JELLYVISION

CAMPAIGN ROADSHOW

Every month, our readers scrutinize the print and television media for inventive, humorous, or off-the-wall adverts. Here are this month's picks.

TOP PRINT ADS FOR FEBRUARY

1 EA SPORTS
NBA LIVE 2000

If you've got it, flaunt it: EA wastes no time using His Airness' image in ads for their 2000 hoops game. We miss you, Mike!



2 MAXIS
THE SIMS

This ad manages to give an informative snapshot of the gleeful chaos that can occur in this game. Everyone into the hot tub!



3 SIERRA
GABRIEL KNIGHT

A creepy, fanged angel gets ready to chomp on our hero Gabriel in a gorgeous illustration. Gabe—get some clothes on!



Vote online at www.incitegames.com, or send your votes to: **incite PC Games, 650 Townsend St, Ste 305, San Francisco, CA 94103**, Source: Reader voting.

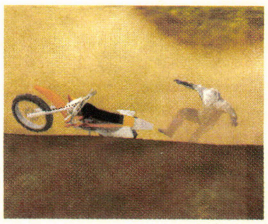
On Two Wheels

Grab That Helmet and Don Those Leathers

Set to ship in spring 2000, *Motocross Madness 2* aims to pick up where its forefather left off. With a bevy of new gaming modes, a host of expansive worlds to explore and Supercross tracks designed by racer Stephane Roncada MM2 promises to unleash the would-be extreme athlete inside all of us.

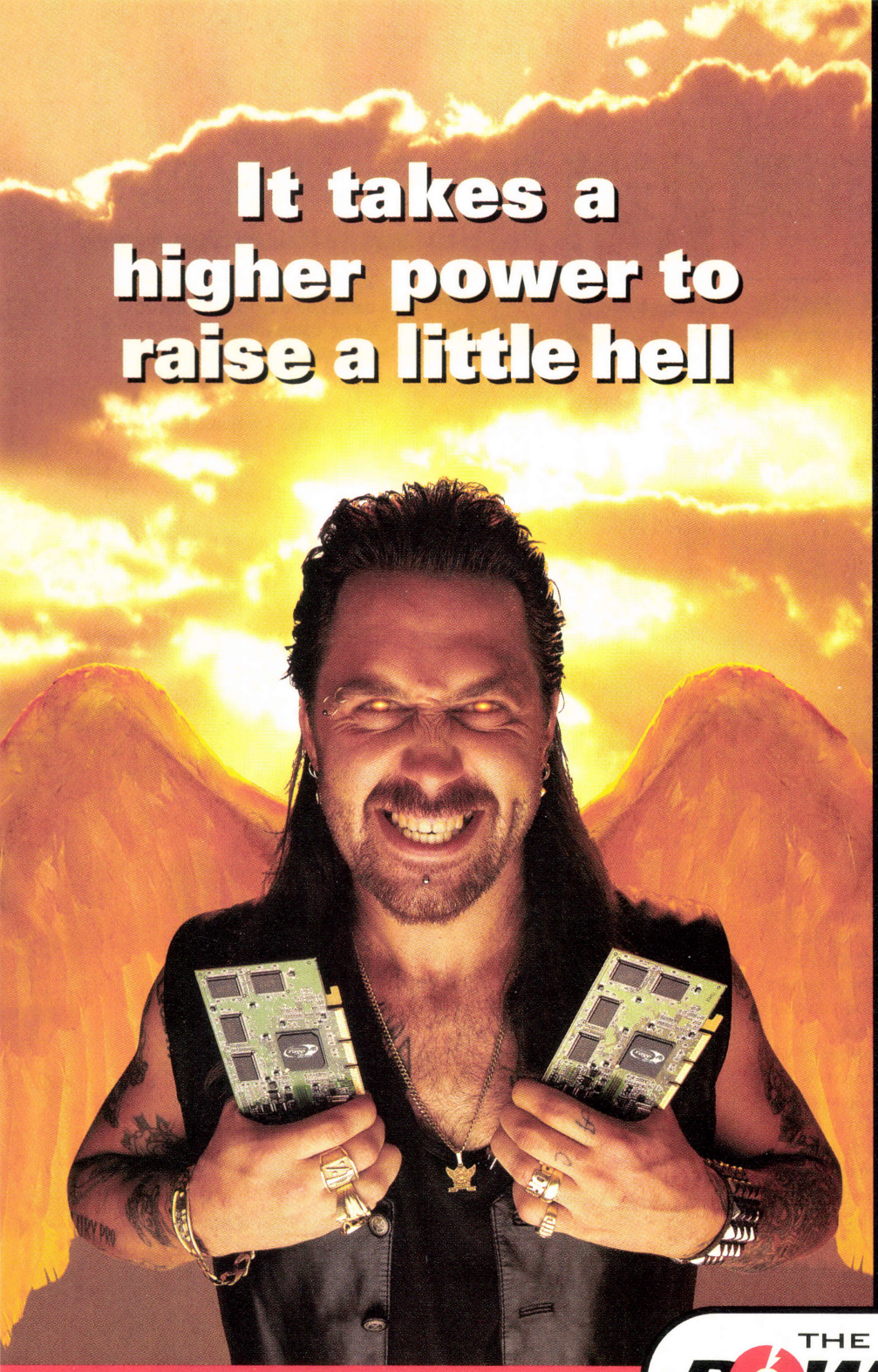
MM2 will sport a myriad of riding locations including the now classic stunt quarry, where riders can practice freestyle moves like nac-nacs, airwalks, supermen, cliff hangers, cordovas, and more. And gamers that are about outright racing will welcome two new racing modes: Pro Circuit Racing and Enduro Racing.

Look for an in-depth preview of *Motocross Madness 2* next month in *incite PC Gaming.*



MOTO PHOTO This crash will definitely leave a mark.

It takes a higher power to raise a little hell



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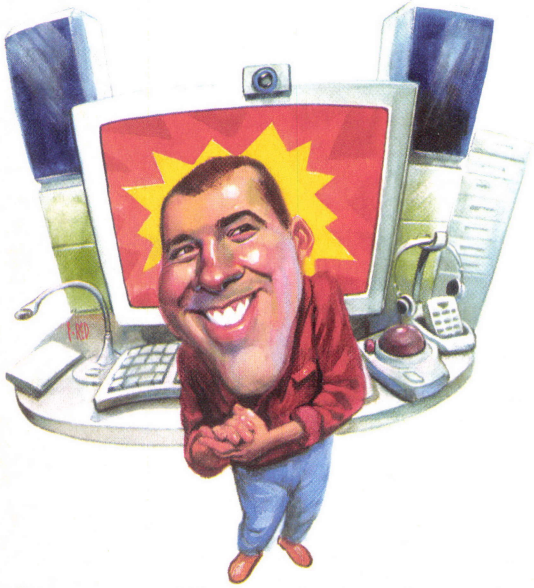
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RANTING

NO HOLDS BARRED EDITORIAL SEETHING

QUIT YOUR WHINING AND FRICKIN' UPGRADE

David Rees is sick and tired of hearing it from all you upgrade pansies out there.



Are you one of those people who *really* wanted to play *Nocturne* but couldn't because you only had 64MB of RAM and figured that your PII/233MHz just couldn't hack it? Do you complain about games that have high minimum requirements? Do you think anyone feels sorry for you? I don't...cry baby.

Time to gloat: I financed a 500Mhz Pentium III with 128MB of RAM, a 21-inch monitor, and a booming 3D sound setup that could be used as a backup system at any local dance club. And each year, I make an effort to upgrade certain components of my system. Heck, the way things are going of late, that might happen twice a year. But playing PC games is a passion of mine, and for that reason, I make sure that I have a good setup.

Do you think anyone feels sorry for you? I don't... cry baby.

I will be the first to admit that *Nocturne* has "steep" system requirements (128MB RAM and 1GB of hard disk space is recommended), but I believe that to be a plus rather than a minus. The guys at Terminal Reality had a vision that ended up requiring more resources than any other game to date. But rather than sacrificing innovation for mass-market appeal, they did what it takes to realize their original concept.

It's no different than buying a car. If you want to drive fast, you buy a Porsche. You tailor your car to fit your *driving* requirements, so why not tailor your PC to fit your *playing* requirements? It's time to quit your whining and pony up.



Rumor
OF THE MONTH

■ **LucasArts has tapped Verant Interactive, makers of *EverQuest*, to develop a massively multiplayer game that takes place in the *Star Wars* universe.**

■ **OUR TAKE**

Representatives of both LucasArts and Verant wouldn't comment on the matter, which 9 times out of 10 means that the rumor in question is true. The idea makes sense for both companies. Verant gets to leverage their next title with the greatest movie franchise of all time, while LucasArts gets to enter the massive and increasing popular multiplayer gaming genre with a company that revolutionized it On the other hand, George Lucas is notorious for being a control-freak when it comes to managing the *Star Wars* property, so it's hard to believe he would green-light a project in which fans can run around in a public version of a universe he created.

ILLUSTRATION BY FRED HARPER

Duke Gets New Parent

The French Complete Their Insidious Takeover

French game publisher Infogrames snatched up a controlling stake in GT Interactive.

After several months of relative calm, the dealmaking between game companies picked up steam again as two heavyweights announced separate acquisitions.

First off, French game publisher Infogrames snatched up a controlling stake in GT Interactive for $135 million. In GT, Infogrames gets some of the industry's best-known labels and game franchises, such as *Duke Nukem* and WizardWorks (makers of *Deer Hunter*).

In other takeover news, Eidos bought a 51 percent stake in John Romero's troubled game company, Ion Storm. They were already publishing Ion Storm's titles, but now that Eidos is the controlling owner, maybe it can work on getting John Romero and Co. to get Ion Storm games to meet their deadlines.

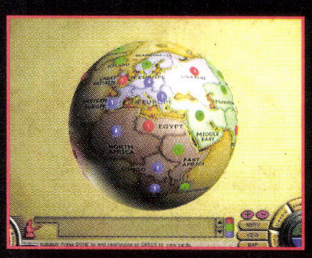


PARLEZ VOUS NUKEM? French-owned Infogrames is now Duke's boss.

History's greatest generals didn't wait their turn to attack.

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RISK II





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TOP 20

In association with The NPD Group, here are the top 20 best-selling PC games for the month and the top 10 in three categories.

1 N — **Age of Empires II**
• Microsoft • Strategy
A thousand years is a long time to fit into a CD-ROM, but the reigning champion of RTS games has got them covered, from the fall of Rome through the Middle Ages. Players get to hone their skills at building an empire and smiting their enemies. Bill Gates has no use for this game—he gets to do this in real life.



2 N — **Deer Hunter 3**
• WizardWorks • Sports
This hunting series that started the craze doesn't appear to be losing its touch, despite stiff competition.



3 — 3 — **Rainbow Six: Rogue Spear**
• Red Storm • Action
Tom Clancy's latest interactive commando game continues to deep-six the competition.



4 N — **Cabela's Big Game Hunter 3**
• HeadGames • Sports
Cabela must be happy: The game bearing its name is in shooting distance of *Deer Hunter 3*.



5 ▼ 1 — **C&C: Tiberian Sun**
• Westwood • Strategy
Last's month's #1 game makes a big drop. Is the *C&C* franchise losing its commanding hold on RTS fans?



6 ▼ 5 — **Roller Coaster Tycoon**
• Microsoft • Strategy
It'll be interesting to see how *Sim Theme Park* competes with *Roller Coaster Tycoon*.



7 N — **Homeworld**
• Sierra • Strategy
With stellar graphics and a great storyline, gamers are finding out that there's no place like *Home*.



8 N — **Driver**
• GT Interactive • Racing
You are the Wheelman. Too bad the Wheelman is all alone due to the lack of a multiplayer option.



9 ▼ 4 — **Rainbow Six Gold Pack**
• Red Storm • Action
This deluxe version of the first *Rainbow Six* continues to hang on to a top-10 spot.



10 ▼ 7 — **Half-Life**
• Sierra • Action
Valve's FPS should get its second-wind since you need it to play the new *Opposing Force* add-on.



11 N — **Flight Simulator 2000 Pro**
• Microsoft. • Simulation
The pro version is outselling its cheaper regular edition—go figure.

12 N — **Harley-Davidson: Race Across America**
• WizardWorks • Racing
Call it the *Cannonball Run* of motorcycles: players race to compete in the Sturgis Bike Rally.

13 ▼ 2 — **Madden 2000**
• Electronic Arts • Sports
EA Sports' pigskin offering gets sacked, dropping from last month's #2 position.

14 N — **Warcraft 2: Battle.net**
• Hasbro • Boardgame
The battle for Azeroth continues in this definitive collection.

15 N — **NASCAR Racing 3**
• Sierra • Racing
Sierra's latest version covers the '99 season, including the Winston Cup and Busch Series.

16 10 — **Need for Speed III**
• Electronic Arts • Racing
EA's third *Need for Speed* is still out-selling its fourth, *Hot Pusuit*.

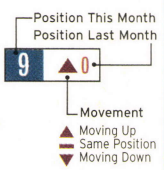
17 ▼ 9 — **SimCity 3000**
• Maxis • Strategy
The best-selling game of '99 sets its eyes on 2000. It should be here for a while.

18 N — **Heroes of Might & Magic 3**
• 3DO • Strategy
The third installment continues the saga of the mythical land of Erathia.

19 ▼ 12 — **Frogger**
• Hasbro • Action
Released in '97, *Frogger* has shown remarkable staying power.

20 ▼ 16 — **Army Men**
• 3DO • Action
There's no sign of the sequel on the charts, but the original continues to sell well.

CHART LEGEND



RANK RULES

Chart information on this page provided by The NPD Group (NPD TRSTS Interactive Entertainment Service).

NPD
THE NPD GROUP, INC.

TOP 10 Racing

1	N	**Driver** • GT Interactive
2	N	**Harley-Davidson** • WizardWorks
3	— 3	**NASCAR 3** • Sierra
4	▼ 1	**Need for Speed III** • EA
5	▼ 2	**NASCAR 2** • Sierra
6	— 6	**Hot Wheels Stunt** • Mattel
7	▼ 5	**NASCAR 99** • Sierra
8	▲ 7	**All American NASCAR** • Sierra
9	— 9	**Star Wars: Racer** • LucasArts
10	— 10	**Moto Extreme** • Valuesoft

NASCAR-licensed games continue to dominate the racing circuit. But how did that Harley-Davidson title get up there?

TOP 10 Shooters

1	— 1	**Half-Life** • Sierra
2	— 2	**Delta Force** • Novalogic
3	▲ 4	**Redneck Rampage** • Interplay
4	N	**Freespace 2** • Interplay
5	▲ 7	**Unreal** • GT Interactive
6	▼ 3	**Quake II** • Activision
7	▼ 5	**Aliens vs. Predator** • Fox
8	— 8	**Duke Nukem 3D** • GT Interactive
9	▲ 10	**Guns and Ammo** • EA
10	▼ 6	**Jedi Knight/Sith** • LucasArts

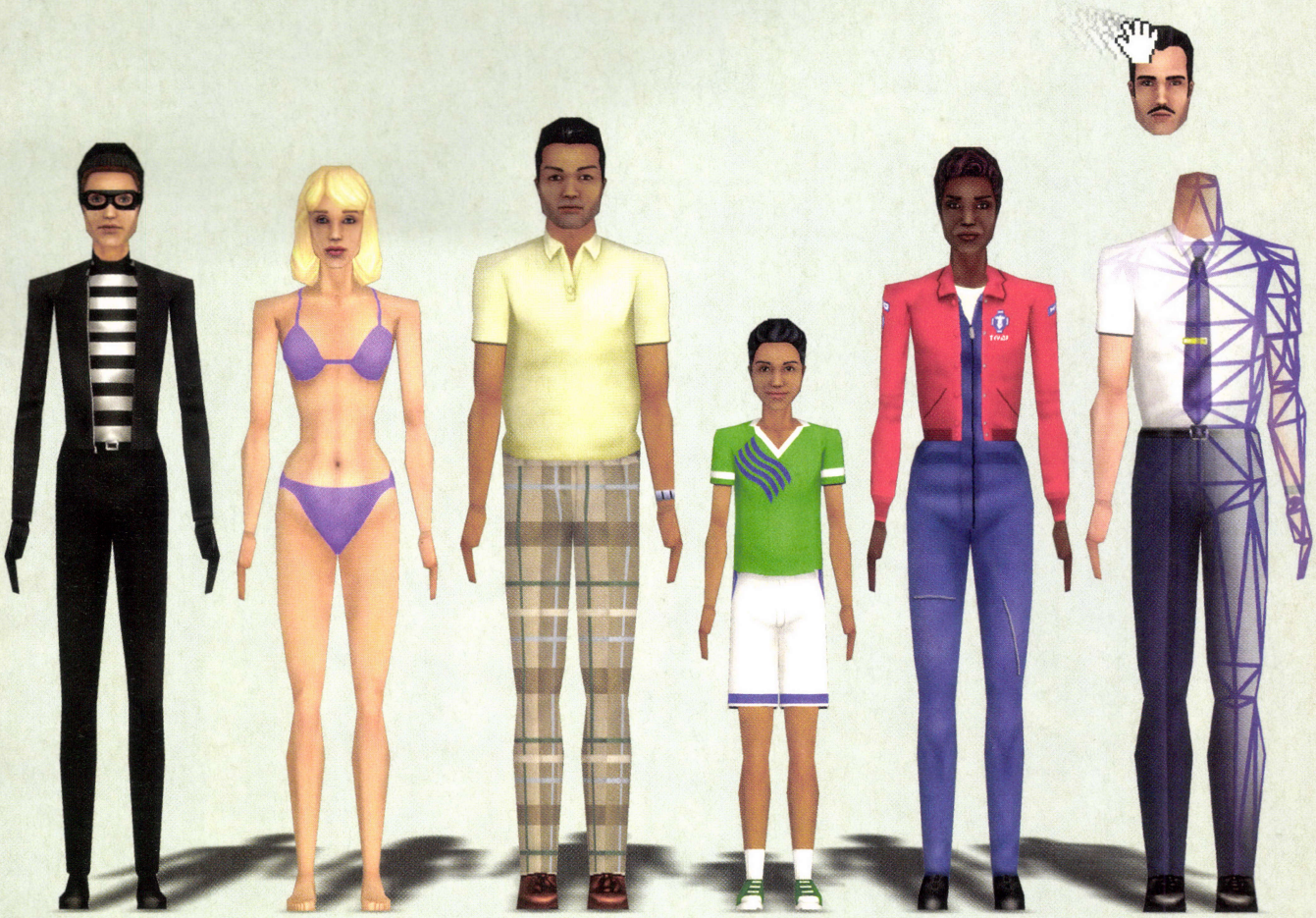
The landscape should change dramatically with the influx of new FPS games such as *Quake III: Arena* and *Unreal Tournament*.

TOP 10 Strategy

1	N	**Age of Empires II** • Microsoft
2	— 2	**R6: Rogue Spear** • Red Storm
3	▼ 1	**C&C: Tiberian Sun** • Westwood
4	— 4	**Roller Coaster Tycoon** • Hasbro
5	N	**Homeworld** • Sierra
6	▼ 3	**Rainbow Six Gold** • Red Storm
7	N	**WarCraft II: BattleChest** • Blizzard
8	▼ 6	**SimCity 3000** • Maxis
9	N	**Heroes of Might & Magic 3** • 3DO
10	▼ 8	**Army Men** • Microsoft

The new *Age of Empires II* debuts at #1. Something tells us it'll be on this top 10 list for a long time.

Creation
is the easy part...



David	Shannon	Stan	Justin	Doris	????
Lazy	Active	Serious	Outgoing	Grouchy	??
Shy	Playful	Neat	Nice	Sloppy	??

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Issue Tactical Orders: Command your teams of troops with the Squad Manager Interface, devoting your time to the overall strategic picture, instead of micro-managing forces.

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"*Dark Reign 2* looks set to take a commanding lead among the next wave of real-time strategy titles."

— *Gamespot*

DARK REIGN™ 2

THE BATTLEFIELD OF THE FUTURE

It's a Real-time Robotathon

Psygnosis Wants to Send the World of Real-time Strategy Into Orbit With **METAL FATIGUE**

■ PUBLISHER **Psygnosis** ■ DEVELOPER **Zono** ■ GENRE **Real-time Strategy** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q2 2000**

INSIGHT

Q. So what's different about this real-time strategy game?
A. There are three levels of gameplay at once: sub-terranean, terranean, and in orbit.
Q. How many Combot configurations are possible?
A. So many that you'll never be able to create them all.

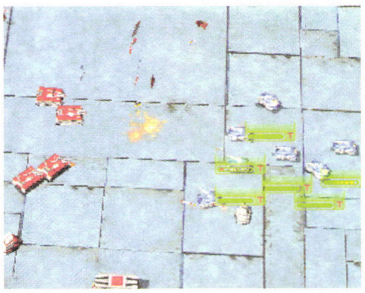
Gamelock: a) the condition that results when a game is so addictive that it precludes the inability to think about, concentrate upon, or ponder anything else b) see *Metal Fatigue.*

By Joe Vallina

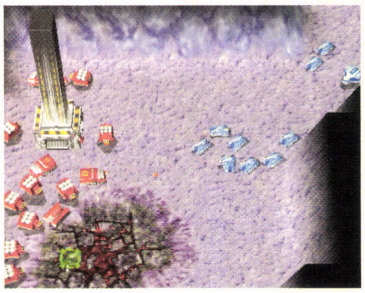
I've been a computer gaming journalist for a little over three years. In all that time, I've experienced some pretty tough gamelocked days and nights.

When *Quake II* hit my hard-drive, I spent hour upon bleary eyed hour fragging my co-editors. When *Age of Empires* deathmatches started, I couldn't concentrate on editing; I had too many civilizations to conquer, dammit! When *FIFA 99* kicked its way into my skull, I lost days on end.

But to be honest, I haven't run across a game that has really grabbed my attention with two hands and shook me into oblivion since then. Enter *Metal Fatigue*. Damn you, Zono!



TYPICAL, YET FUN These types of land battles should look familiar to strategy fans.



UNDERGROUND BATTLE This legion of blue tanks is about to pummle some red scum.

Domo Arigato Mr. Roboto

Metal Fatigue's storyline is pretty standard for the genre, as there are three factions that fight each other, in this case, Rimtech, MilAgro, and Neuropa. The twist comes in the form of three brothers, Diego, Jonus, and Stefan Angelus.

The three start out working for Rimtech, but when they go on a recon mission and discover some alien technology (parts of a Combot), they end up splitting up, with each eventually joining a different one of the three factions. In the game's three campaigns, you'll play as each brother.

Metal Fatigue uses lots of tricks to suck you into its inescapable little world. Or should I say worlds? Because the first trick is the way that *Metal Fatigue* is three, three, three games in one!

Sure, you control your troops via the now-standard real-time strategy model of point, click, and watch carnage ensue; but the real challenge lies in the fact that you have to keep track of units on the ground, under the planet's crust, and in orbit. And the best thing about it is that all of the different environments work simultaneously and in tandem with each other.

For example, if you have a battle in orbit and a piece of the unit gets knocked off, it will fall to the planet's surface without so much as a "look out below." So if you happen to be controlling units down there, they can be crushed by the falling debris.

The units in *Metal Fatigue* are also quite innovative. They consist of a mix of standard real-time strategy units, such as resource gathering hovercraft and tanks, and MechWarrior-like giant robots called Combots, which you can pilot around the planet's surface and in orbit.

Each of the three races starts the game with the ability to research certain Combot parts, in the form of specialized arms, legs, and



CLANK! One more swipe should finish off the purple Combot. Let this be a lesson to you all: When you steal someone's leg parts, you'd better hope his big brother doesn't find out about it and kick your ass.

FLYING DEATH Two Combots finish off an intruder in an orbit battle.

torsos. But as the robots clash in battle and parts of the enemy's robot are lopped off, your Combots can pick them up and use the pieces right then and there.

What's even better, you can then take the captured robot parts back to your home base and research them for your own production lines. With about 500 original parts in the game, the number of mixtures are, for all intents and purposes, limitless.

***Metal Fatigue* uses lots of tricks to suck you into its inescapable little world.**

Management is Key

The key to success in *Metal Fatigue,* though, is in effective, simultaneous management of all three environments. When I first heard about this concept, I thought that this would be nearly impossible. After all, controlling all of your units in normal real-time strategy games is sometimes a chore.

But where this co-management could easily become tedious, the voice cues and easy scrolling from level to level in *Metal Fatigue* make this daunting task seem easy. Zono Game Designer Jason Hough fills us in on how the game's designers are trying to make managing resources as painless as possible.

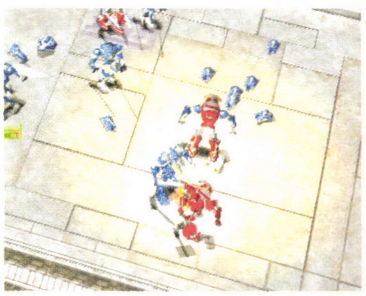
"We have created a system whereby the player doesn't have to wait for a building to be built before cueing up units for production," says Hough. "Also, we are implementing a 'pre-build' phase in *Metal Fatigue.*"

This pre-build phase lets the player set up as many buildings and units as he would like (within a set perimeter of his home base) before the game even starts. According to Hough, "We were tired of all the real-time strategy games in the way that they all started out in the same race to build as many buildings as possible. By letting the player pre-build a basic base—with defensive units—we have tried to create a more realistic battle scenario and avoid the all-too-common rushes."

The folks at Zono have done a fine job so far at building an original game. If all goes according to plan, *Metal Fatigue* will be one of the best real-time strat games of 2000.



JOIN THE AIR FORCE It looks like it's time to do a fighter strike to take out those pesky solar panels.



CLASH OF THE TITANS These blue Combots have some tanks to back them up.

Don't be afraid of the dark.

Somewhere in the darkness hides a thief. Darting from the light into the darkness. Trying not to be seen. Trying to get away without murder.

In Thief II: The Metal Age, the quiet revolution of the first-person action genre continues. If you missed out on the original Thief, don't let the experience be stolen from you again.



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GAMERS CHOICE PCGame REVIEW

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD ★★★★½

EDITORS' CHOICE

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Be afraid of what it hides.

Time to Get Medieval!

BALDUR'S GATE II: SHADOWS OF AMN Is Coming and Our Bard-on-the Scene Has the Scoop

■ PUBLISHER **Interplay** ■ DEVELOPER **BioWare** ■ GENRE **Role-playing Game** ■ PLAYERS **1-100** ■ RELEASE DATE **Q3 2000**

INSIGHT

Q. Will *Dungeons & Dragons* fans enjoy *Baldur's Gate II*?
A. Hang on, let me roll my 20-sided die and see...Yep.

Q. Will I get beaten up for playing a role-playing game like I did in high school?
A. No. Remind the morons who try to kick your butt that geeks now make on average twice as much as their gas-pumping asses.

Just when the computer-gaming industry thought that computer role-playing games were dead, *Baldur's Gate* came out of nowhere to steal the hearts (and countless hours) of gamers worldwide.

By Darren Gladstone

Come in friends. Sit down and try some of this ale. My name is Aahz Brodin and I have a story to tell. A tale of magic and mystery, of gods and men, of a game called *Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn.*

A year ago the world was a much darker place. Iron was in short supply, war loomed with Amn to the south, and people were mysteriously disappearing throughout the land.

Meanwhile, a young lad slowly began to learn of his mysterious past—he was the mortal-born son of Bhaal, the god of murder, and the boy had a twin brother bent on world domination.

The bards will sing of that glorious battle for ages. The sinister sibling was defeated, but died knowingly laughing. What was in store for our hero?

In *Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn,* that same boy faces an uncertain future. His birthright tempts the unscrupulous to use him and causes the ignorant to fear him. According to the wizards at BioWare, who are chronicling the adventure, our hero will face a foe that toys with him at every turn. The villain's goals go beyond a simple quest for power.

The lords of BioWare, Drs. Ray Muzyka and Greg Zeschuk, are carefully guarding the storyline, but they were more than happy to share some information about the game. All it took was some coaxing and a few bottles of mead.

Welcome, Travelers

The game is set just south of the lands you explored in the first *Baldur's Gate.* The Southlands of Amn is a strange place. You can travel through elven forests, underwater cities, and even explore the Drow (Dark Elf) civilization.

Whether you've already heard the tale of *Baldur's Gate* or this is



RING OF FIRE The "Johnny Cash" spell is the most powerful in the game.



ALL RED AND MUSCULAR Some of the creatures in *Baldur's Gate II* could pass as bouncers at the Hard Rock Cafe.

your first time entering into the adventure, you will be able to get right into the action. You can import your own warrior from adventures past or start from scratch with an already advanced creation.

You'll be able to play as a Human, Elf, Drow, Half-Elf, Dwarf, Gnome, Halfling, or Half-Orc. We've also learned that 20 new kits and classes will be added. A kit is basically a modified version of a character class. For example, you can create a Barbarian, an Assassin, a Japanese-inspired Warrior, or a Monk, to name but a few.

As for new skills like dual-weapon wielding and single-weapon proficiency, they are available for higher-level characters, so whether you want to become a crusading knight or Merlin-wannabe, there will be plenty of ways to open up that medieval can of whup-ass.

Along the way, you'll meet 15 distinct NPCs (non-player characters) that are available to join your party. And according to Master Zeschuk, the amount of artificial intelligence and personality scripting will far exceed that of the original game.

What does that mean? NPCs will have more complex dialogue and control options and independent reactions...they'll even form relationships with you and the other NPCs.

Lord Muzyka added that they want to make the game like any good film or novel—they want you to care more about the other characters around you. Over time, you will have mourned lost loves and celebrated new ones. And you also will have battled the hundreds of new creatures populating the game.

According to Master Zeschuk, the amount of artificial intelligence and personality scripting will far exceed that of the original game.

Hocus Pocus

To help you defend your motley crew, Bioware has incorporated over 130 new spells from the pen-and-paper game, bringing the total number of magic tricks to nearly 300. Those into the original pen-and-paper games will be glad to know you now have access to the most powerful ninth-level magic spells that can decimate a crowd.

Muzyka also assures fellow travelers that a slew of new weapons and magical items, such as the legendary Holy Avenger and the Staff of the Magi, will be hidden throughout the realm.

It took years of programming to weave the original tale, so why is the sequel coming out so quickly? For starters, the game engine doesn't have to be made from scratch. It will be an enhanced version of the one used for *Baldur's Gate*, featuring lush 2D environments. But the engine will also be optimized for OpenGL 3D hardware at 800x600 resolutions. You'll be able to see the most benefits with spellcasting effects, water translucency, and the 3D fog-of-war. Otherwise, the real focus is on new lands to explore and people to meet.

Baldur's Gate II won't be a short game. There will be well over 100 sub-missions to keep you distracted from the twisting plotline. Once you complete one of the major objectives (and if your character reaches ninth level), you can create strongholds for your heroes. These include an imposing keep for your



STOP DRAGON MY HEART AROUND Little Johnny was ostracized due to his green skin. Racism isn't a pretty thing.



incite PC Gaming **ACTION GUIDE**

Warlords for Dummies

Here's How to Become a Powerful Warlord in *Baldur's Gate II!*

1. Big Sword, Will Travel
Hey, what's a Barbarian-about-town supposed to do without one of these? Learn quickly how to slice friends and influence people with one of 20 new sub-classes to choose from. Then slice-and-dice your way to the top of the heap.

2. Get a Cute and Cuddly Sidekick
The Beastmaster had two intimidating ferrets—Minsc from *Baldur's Gate* had a menacing hamster, and you'll have a choice of 15 NPCs to join your six-person team at different times in *Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn*. Choose him or her wisely.

3. Clothes Are Optional
Conan, everyone's favorite barbarian, may not be able to accessorize, but that shouldn't stop you. Hundreds of new magical items will be hidden throughout the realm. Of course, if you want to run around naked, go right ahead.

4. Spelling Disaster
Who inspired you to hop on a broomstick and turn people into toads: Merlin or Samantha from *Bewitched*? It doesn't matter, because 130 new spells have been added to *Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn*, bringing the total to 300 tricks.

5. Words of Wisdom
According to Conan the Barbarian, these are the three greatest things in life: "To crush the enemy, to see them flee before you, and to hear the lamentation of their women." We couldn't agree more.

fighter, a temple for the cleric, a thieves guild to pay homage to your stealth, or even a theater to enact your bardly plays.

Balance in All Things

As in the previous game, an experience cap will be in place to provide level gameplay. The last thing the folks at BioWare want is to create an unbalanced game with God-like player characters, so you'll only be able to advance to about three million experience points.

That means there will be a range of level limits from a 17th level Wizard to a 24th level Druid. "If your character is that powerful, you've got to invest a ridiculous amount of time on the computer," said Zeschuk. He promised that over 100 hours of your life will evaporate quicker than a jug of water in the Sahara.

As far as being able to play with other travelers over the Internet, you have the same gameplay options as in the first game. The game host is the main character and up to five people can join him on the journey. Zeschuk explained that *Baldur's Gate II* will be the ultimate single-player role-playing game experience with some multiplayer elements.

That is all I could pry from Zeschuk and Muzyka before they were overcome by the heavy ale, so I have no more story to tell for now...but I can regale you with adventures of the time I met Vanilla Ice...Wait! Where are you going?!?

It took years of programming to weave the original tale, so why is the sequel coming out so quickly?



STAY AWAY OR ELSE! These two skeletons are feeling left out of the party. C'mon people, share the love!

DEVELOPER SPOTLIGHT

The Wizards of Amn

Drs. Ray Muzyka and Greg Zeschuk are life-long gamers that can hack and slash you on a computer then give you a physical when you're done. We caught up with the joint CEOs of BioWare to learn more about them...and get our flu shots.

How did you guys first meet?
Greg Zeschuk: It was just before med school. We've been best friends for about 12 years now and we've always had a shared interest in games. That's part of the reason that we formed BioWare together. We started doing medical education software back in 1992. A year or so later we met up with some talented programmers and made our first game, *Shattered Steel*.

Was it just a side pastime or did you play games all the time?
Ray Muzyka: All the guys at BioWare are huge video game fans. That's one of key attributes of everyone at the company: We're all passionate about playing games. In fact, the people that are working on *Baldur's Gate II* have never programmed for games before, but spent a lifetime behind controllers–and they are doing an amazing job.

So, being game junkies, what are some of the titles that inspired you to create your own?
RM: The *Ultima* series, *System Shock*, *Wasteland*, everything from Blizzard, the *Wizardry* series...there are so many great games with vast worlds and involved stories, I could just keep going.

You have all these close ties to *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, did you play the original game growing up?
RM: We played *D&D* back in junior high like all young geeks do. The pen-and-paper games have a rich tradition and we want to continue that with all of our games. Now I've retired all my eight-sided dice to the bottom of my fish tank.

You've developed quite a following with *Baldur's Gate* fan sites and guilds. Are you concerned about not being able to live up to the legacy with the next title?
GZ: The fans allowed us to make the game we wanted to make. They helped us all through the development by giving us great ideas that we've incorporated into the games. We try to keep in touch with all the people that post messages. And in a way, we wouldn't be in business if it weren't for those sites.

What do you think about games like *EverQuest*, *Ultima Online*, and *Asheron's Call*?
RM: There are excellent elements in each of those games. But one of the things we're trying to do with *NeverWinter Nights* [BioWare's upcoming online adventure game] is to focus on interpersonal player relationships and having a human dungeon master that supervises the session, so you can have 16 to 64 people playing together. We think that will recreate the original experience of friends getting together to play the pen-and-paper game.

So, you obviously finished med school and made your moms' proud. Which do you enjoy doing more: making games or playing doctor?
GZ: Well, being able to create the games is a great feeling, but we still work as doctors on the side.
RM: I still work in the emergency room on occasion.

Speaking of that...I've had this nasty headache lately....
Both: [groan]



WE ALL SHOP TOGETHER The *Baldur's Gate II* team dress like lemmings, but we like them anyway.



LORDS OF THEIR DOMAIN
Drs. Greg Zeschuk (left) and Ray Muzyka don't even make virtual house calls.

REAL TIME STRATEGY IN THE FINAL FRONTIER



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Mild Language

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Available on PC CD-ROM



WHO DAT IS? Not your baby daddy. That's Major Jack Shepherd from the Global Defense Initiative (GDI)

Why Waste a Good Story?

COMMAND AND CONQUER: RENEGADE Realizes Its Action Potential

■ PUBLISHER **Westwood Studios** ■ DEVELOPER **Westwood Studios** ■ THEME **Action** ■ PLAYERS **1-16** ■ AVAILABLE **Q3 2000**

INSIGHT

Q. What's inside the Hand of NOD?

A. Now why would we ruin it for you? You'll be able to go inside and see for yourself, but you'll have to kill a gang of NOD first.

Q. In *Renegade* will I be able to control other GDI troops?

A. You control freak! If you want to control people just play *C&C*. In *Renegade* you won't be able to control other troops. There will be missions where you fight along side other GDI forces.

Change being the only constant in life, today's action gamer wants a decent storyline and fleshed out characters. This is why the *Command & Conquer* universe was ripe for an action game.

By William O'Neal

If there's one thing that the '90s signify, it's that a game franchise can last a very long time. Realizing that the *Command & Conquer* franchise would have a life expectancy longer than Donald Trump's list of ex-wives, Westwood Studios is parlaying the *Command & Conquer* story into an action game with *Command & Conquer Renegade*.

Expected in 2000, *Renegade* has players assume the role of one of *Command & Conquer's* favorite characters, the commando, in a third-person perspective shoot-'em-up-cum-strategy game.

As Major Jack Shepherd, son of General Shepherd from the Global Defense Initiative (GDI), players will finally be able to battle it out on ground level in the *Command & Conquer* universe as they embark on the daunting task of defeating Kane and his zealous followers in the Brotherhood of NOD.

Where the *Command & Conquer* games have traditionally involved controlling battles from afar, *Renegade* aims to let *Command & Conquer* devotees jump in and do a little bloodletting of the up-close-and-personal variety.



TASTE YER OWN MEDICINE Major Shepherd keeps the Nod ethos of peace via power.

Boasting 15 missions, *Renegade* will have several different ways to reach one's objectives. Players who are fond of *Rambo* style shoot-'em-

ups can go balls out, destroying everything in sight. But the game will also allow players with a greater appreciation for the sublime to opt for a more stealthy approach as they defeat their enemies *Metal Gear Solid* style.

Renegade promises to offer some excellent multiplayer options as well. According to Louis Castle, co-founder of Westwood Studios, "The multiplayer is cooperative and competitive with the individual versus computer opponents."

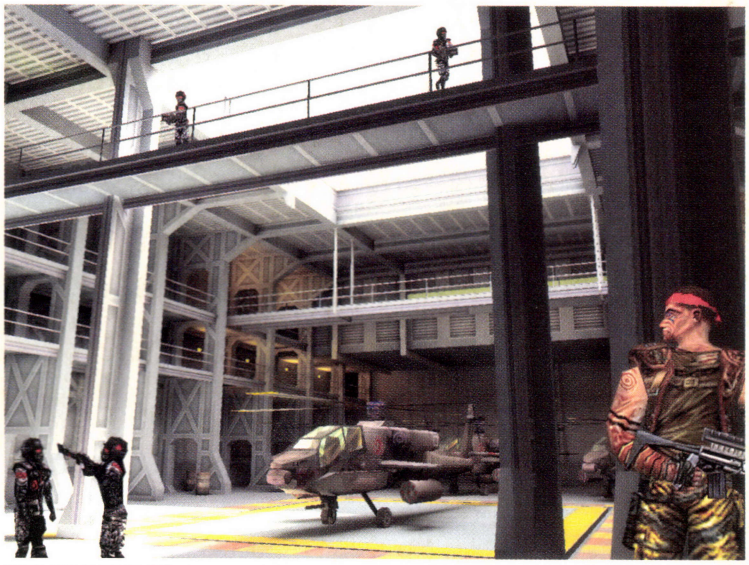
Castle continues, "There are many of the favorite types of play [Capture the Flag, King of the Hill] but most have a new twist [Capture the Mobius]."

Renegade's AI likewise aims to give gamers a unique and realistic gaming experience. Says Castle, "The AI is very smart and is completely aware and responsive to the player and environment. The biggest problem has been dumbing the AI down so that we can test the sub-systems and get the behavior we want for early missions." While *Renegade* won't be sim-like as in the current crop of squad-based games like R*ainbow Six: Rogue Spear* or *SWAT 3*, players will find themselves working with other GDI troops. For instance, if you help out some commandos who are pinned down on a beach, they'll help you out later in the mission.

***Renegade* aims to let *Command & Conquer* devotees jump in and do a little bloodletting of the up-close-and-personal variety.**



WHAT WAS THAT? I'm sorry, I don't speak dogma. I only talk in hot lead.



KEEP YOUR HEAD UP If these NOD don't get with the program soon, Shepherd's gonna open up a proverbial can of whoop-ass. Time to eat it, boys.

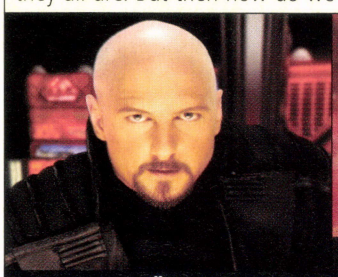
Command & Conquer Renegade's engine is likewise no slouch. When asked why Westwood opted to create an entirely new engine, Castle had this to say: "We discovered early on that we needed an engine that would allow for outdoor environments to recreate the *Command & Conquer* world as it is known to our millions of fans.

"We also needed an engine that would allow for indoor environments so that we could get some of the classic action-shoot-play mechanics working properly. We wanted to be able to mix the two types of engines seamlessly."

Renegade is the action translation of *Command & Conquer*, and die-hard *Command & Conquer* fans should love it. Look for the game to hit the shelves in late 2000.

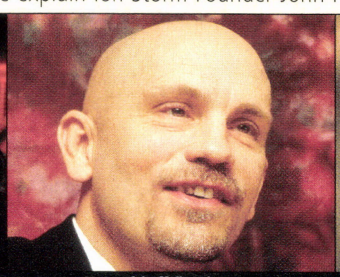
What's the Deal With Bald Guys?

They say that bald men have more testosterone than men with hair. Maybe all that testosterone has something to do with how evil they all are. But then how do we explain Ion Storm Founder John Romero?



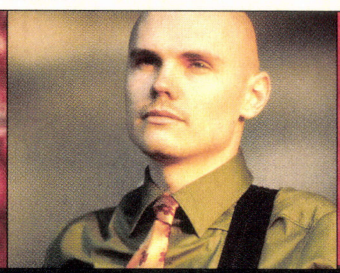
Kane

The egomaniacal leader of the Brotherhood of NOD, Kane is most definitely evil as well as bald. While some think that he was killed at the end of the first Tiberium War, in staying true to his evil ways, he appears to be still alive and kicking.



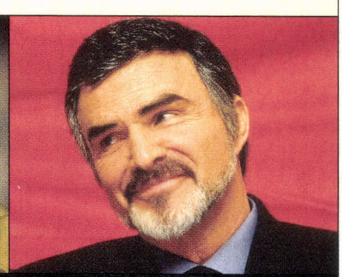
John Malkovich

If the stench of pretense doesn't kill you, the gleam off that dome sure as hell will. The only thing Malkovich has going for him is his appreciation for self-deprecation, as evidenced by his role in *Being John Malkovich*. He's still way evil in our book.



Billy Corgan

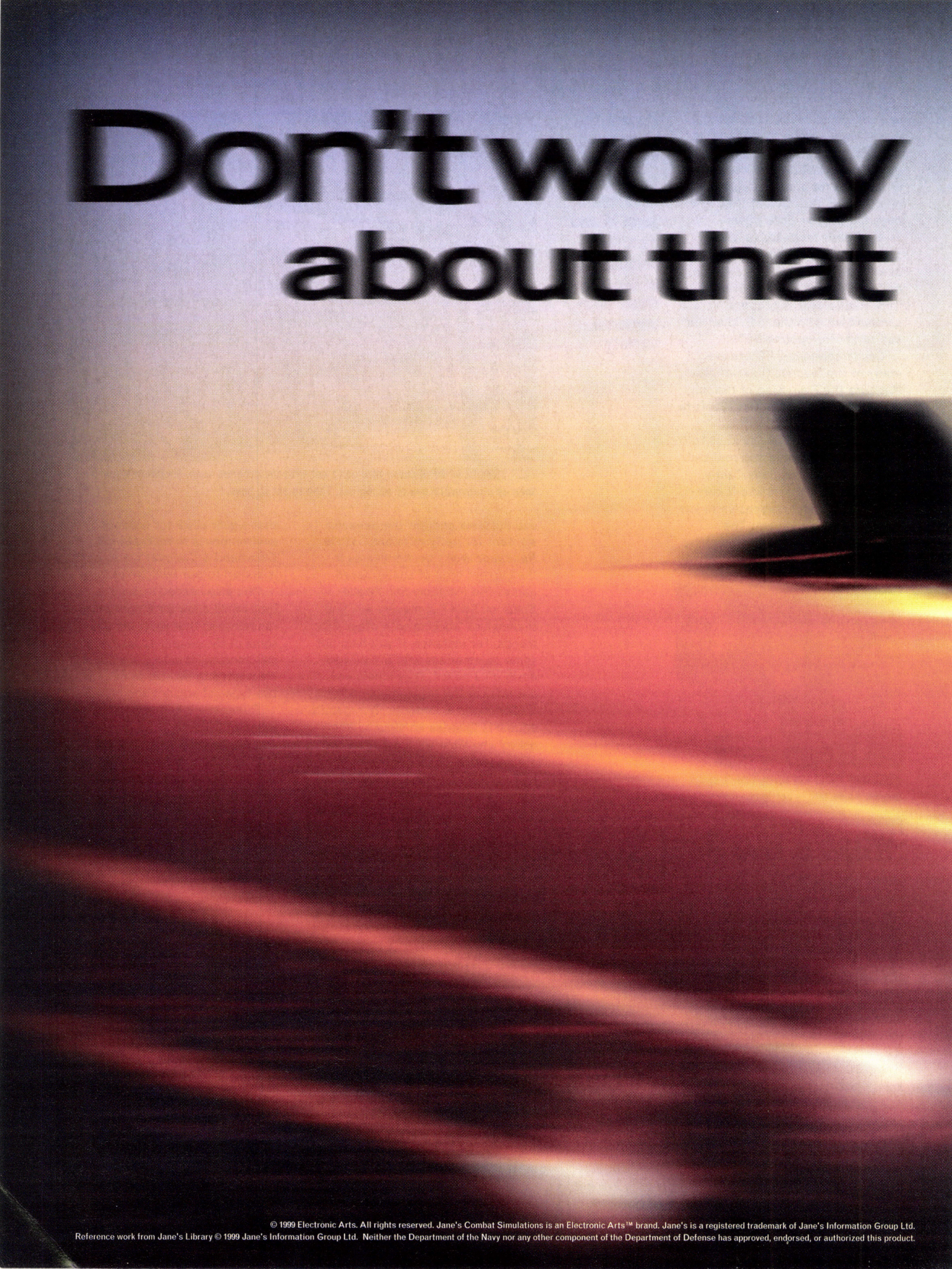
Like most evil bad guys Billy wasn't always evil, (he was definitely good on Smashing Pumpkins' *Gish* and *Siamese Dream*, for example). Furthermore, he wasn't always bald, *(Gish* and *Siamese Dream* again). The connection is too conspicuous to ignore. Bald equals evil.



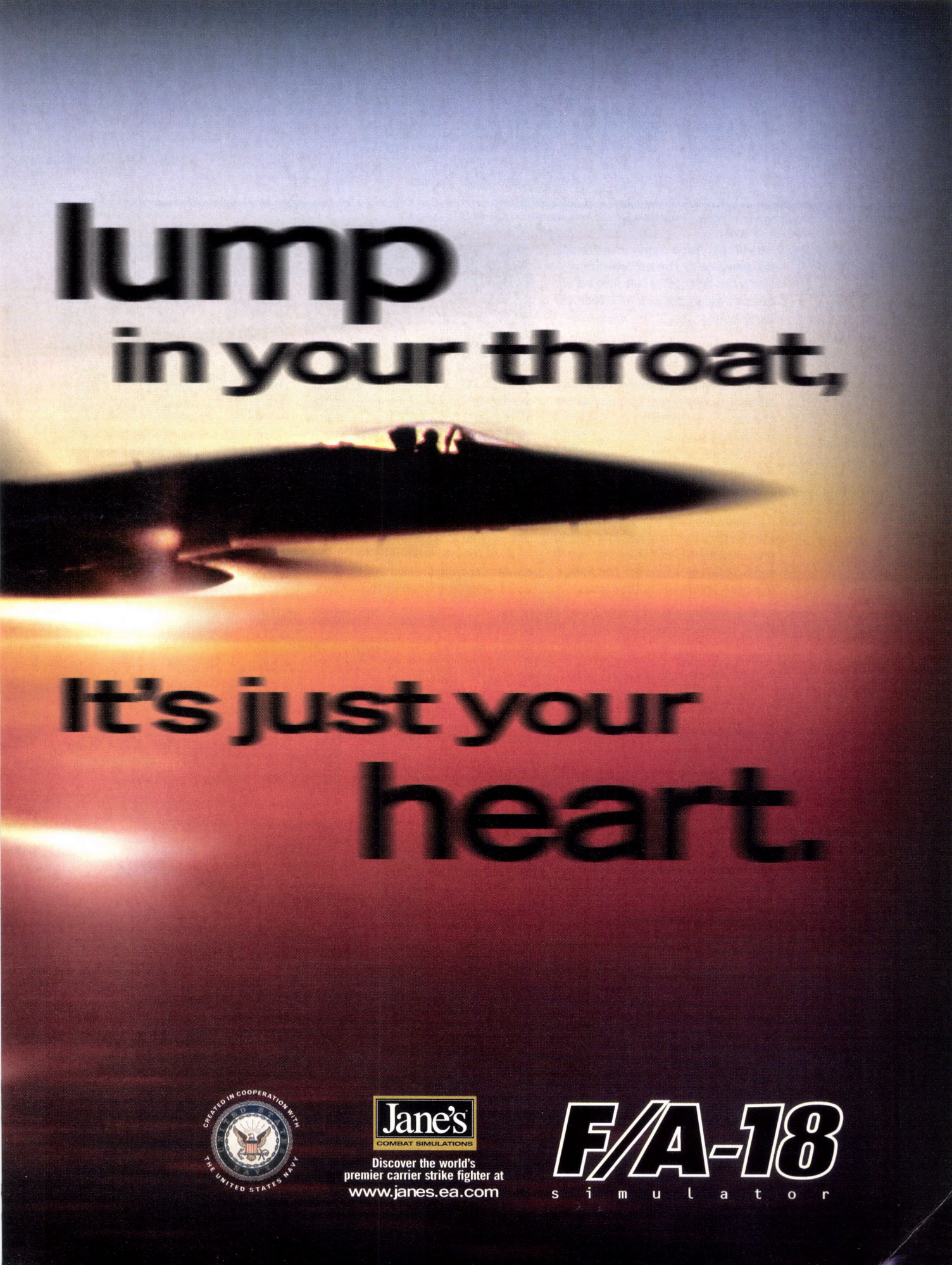
Burt Reynolds

Burt isn't evil; he's just bald. It's hard not to appreciate a guy who can portray a tough-as-nails hunter who put an arrow in a hillbilly who just raped his buddy, and then 25 years later play an aging porn mogul. Wait a minute, *Cannonball Run II?* Now that *was* evil.

SHOOTING STAR (3)



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in your throat,
It's just your
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Goin' Deep With Star Trek

The Series Might Have Been Cancelled But **DEEP SPACE NINE: THE FALLEN** Keeps It Alive

■ PUBLISHER **Simon & Schuster Interactive** ■ DEVELOPER **Gizmo Games** ■ THEME **Action** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ AVAILABLE **Q2 2000**

INSIGHT

Q. There are a lot of *Star Trek* games coming out these days. Which ones should I keep my eye on?

A. Both *The Fallen* and Activision's *Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force* are generating the most buzz, if only because both use state-of-the-art first-person shooter engines (*Unreal* and *Quake III: Arena*, respectively).

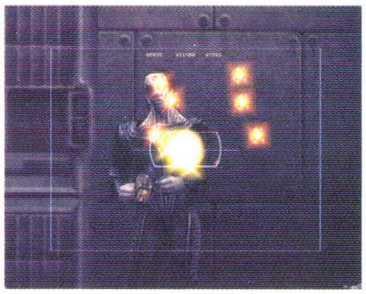
Star Trek: Deep Space Nine **ended its seven-year run on television last year. But its on-air demise doesn't mean it's going to fade into oblivion.**

By Gary Eng Walk

Just because Paramount Studios deep-sixed *Deep Space Nine* on television earlier this year doesn't mean fans have seen the last of the sci-fi series. Thanks to Simon & Schuster Interactive, the show lives on in the new game *Star Trek Deep Space Nine: The Fallen.*

This game is the first game in Simon & Schuster Interactive's master plan: a three-game series that will explore different genres. *The Fallen* is a pure action game that takes place primarily on the famous space station, with a few side jaunts to the planet Bajor and other familiar *Deep Space Nine* destinations.

If you're into continuity—what Tricorder-carrying Trekker isn't?—then you'll want to know that the game's storyline takes place between the 6th and 7th seasons of the series, when the war between the Federation of Planets and the evil Dominion was at its nastiest. If you don't care about the plot, don't worry: "If you want the story, it's out there, but we



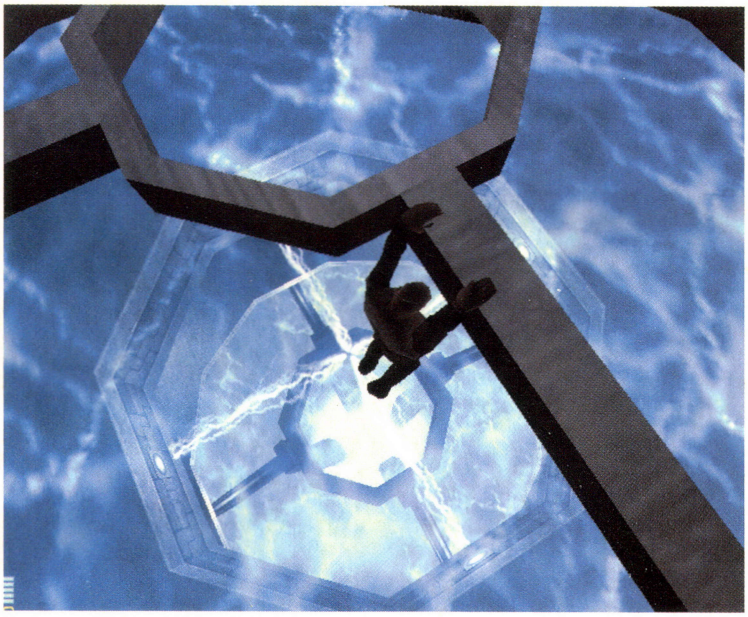
CROSSFIRE ***The Fallen*** **has a first-person sniper mode for the eagle-eyed among us.**



FLASH-FRIED Sisko gets acquainted with the new aliens in town—the hard way.



BLAST 'EM JEAN LUC Picard kicks some ass. Don't ever call him baldy to his face, folks.



FALLEN AND CAN'T GET UP Sisko stumbles in the Arduria level. Um...Sisko, we'd advise you to hold on if you don't want to end up extra crispy. Zap!

don't compel you to follow it." says Producer Kenneth Gordon.

Switching between the personas of Captain Sisko, Lieutenant Commander Worf, and Major Kira, gamers race to find three mystical red orbs that are imbued with the power of the wormhole-dwelling Pah Wraiths. These orbs could destroy the universe if they fell into the wrong hands.

Opposing you in this quest are plenty of phaser targets: Enemies include Cardassians, Jem'Hadar, and the Grigari—a new alien species created especially for the game. Throughout the adventure's 12 missions, you'll also be able to interact with other characters from the show, such as Quark and Dr. Bashir.

The Fallen uses a tweaked version of the *Unreal* engine, so set your phasers for stunning. *The Fallen* is not, however, a first-person shooter: You play from a third-person perspective, although gamers can use a first-person sniper mode while shooting.

***The Fallen* uses a tweaked version of the *Unreal* engine, so set your phasers for stunning.**

"We didn't want it to be a first-person shooter," explains Gordon. "We wanted something that is [full of] action, but we wanted to distinguish the game."

To make *The Fallen* work as a third-person game, Gordon and his development team needed to make difficult adjustments and tweaks to the *Unreal* engine and then scrambled to incorporate elements from *Unreal Tournament* into the engine once Epic Games was able to supply them with the code.

One enhancement was a facial animation system that gives characters an eerily lifelike appearance when speaking (original cast members supplied the voiceovers).

But not all of the features are groundbreaking. *The Fallen* has a multiplayer mode with requisite deathmatch, capture the flag, and team deathmatch modes—hey, even Trekkers feel the need for mindless fragging every once in while.



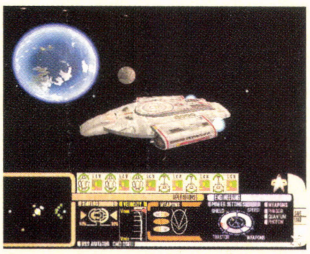
SHEEP IN WORF'S CLOTHING Worf puts up a tough exterior, but he's a softy at heart.

FOR THE TREKKER IN ALL OF US

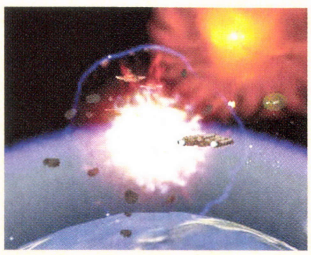
What if You Just Can't Get Enough *Deep Space Nine*?

Legions of fans out there are still seething about *Deep Space Nine's* recent cancellation, and we don't blame them. Thank goodness *Deep Space Nine: The Fallen* isn't the only new game in the works. Check out this up-and-coming strategy game based on the series.

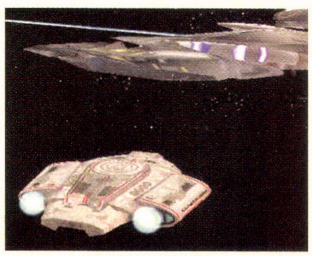
Simon & Schuster Interactive recently announced that the second *Deep Space Nine* game will be a real-time strategy/space combat hybrid developed by Gizmo Games (*Dark Reign, MechWarrior*). Scheduled for a Fall 2000 release, *Dominion Wars* puts players in control of two dozen Federation, Cardassian, Klingon, and Jem'Hadar spaceships. In a new twist to the genre, space jockeys will be able to control six ships simultaneously as they go into battle. According to Gizmo, expect big things from the Quantum game engine, which specializes in real-time graphics rendering, and advanced AI that's ideal for a real-time strategy game.



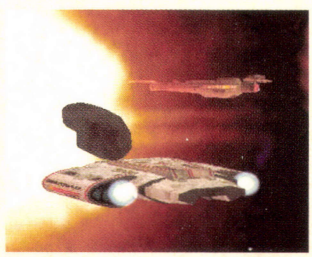
READY FOR BATTLE The graphics are early in development, but look great.



WHAT A BLAST! I told Lt. Dorkman not to add that much dark matter!



READY FOR ACTION The level of detail looks amazing.



SUPERNOVA This could be bad. Looks like a hasty retreat is in order.


YOU ARE KING

YOU ARE BUILDER

You're not just the King of Ardania, you're a medieval Land Baron. Spread your power far and wide with Warrior Guilds, Trading Posts, Temples, Gnome Hovels and Elven Bungalows.



YOU ARE DESTROYER

Lay siege, my liege: Raze the unholy stench from evil's spawning grounds in nineteen replayable, non-linear quests, and freestyle missions of your own devising.



YOU ARE WAR

For every holy day, there is a Harpy. For every peasant, a Troll. For every knight, a Dragon. For every moment of kingship, a Royal pain. Recruit from sixteen different hero classes to fight off the hordes of monsters stalking your kingdom - Rock Golems, Dragons, Daemonwood, oh my!



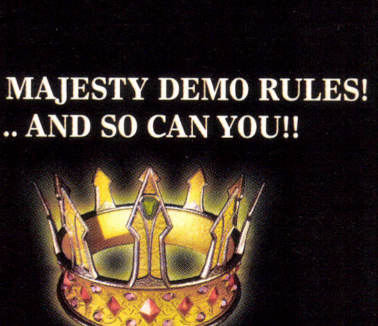
YOU ARE PEACE

Only a sovereign of your great stature can bring peace to the long-suffering peasants of the land. Manage your gold carefully, you'll need to spend it wisely to achieve success.



YOU ARE MIGHT

Yours is an iron fist in a velvet glove. Battle against, or cooperate with, up to three other players in multi-player games - the choice is yours.



YOU ARE THE LAW

You are the Man. If something rubs you the wrong way - put a price on its head! Place reward flags with gold bounties to prod your heroes into dishing out some heavy metal vengeance.

The Fantasy Kingdom Sim

MAJESTY™

YOU RULE

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THE MAJESTY DEMO RULES!
.. AND SO CAN YOU!!



Download the majestic 'MAJESTY' demo and you'll automatically be entered in the 'King for a Day' competition. Win a trip to tour authentic medieval castles in England.

RATING PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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Stealing the Show

Looking Glass Gets Sneakier Than Ever With **THIEF 2: THE METAL AGE**

■ PUBLISHER **Eidos** ■ DEVELOPER **Looking Glass** ■ THEME **Action** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ AVAILABLE **Q4 2000**

INSIGHT

Q. What diagnosis do Garrett's friends in the psychological community give to account for his compulsive thieving?
A. Kleptomania

Q. What is the traditional treatment for kleptomania in western society?
A. A slap on the wrist and behavior therapy.

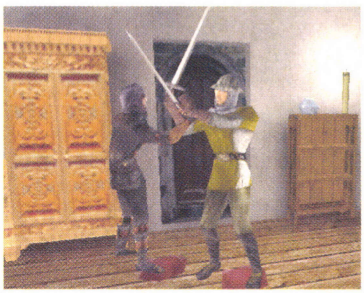
Q. What was the traditional treatment for kleptomania in older Islamic societies?
A. A sword to the wrist and conditioning therapy (usually a couple slaps to the face).

For those who would rather sneak and distract than search and destroy, *Thief 2: The Metal Age* should provide hours of gaming enjoyment.

By A.J. Schneier

Garrett, the reluctant hero and master robber of *Thief: The Dark Project*, returns for more pilfering pleasure in *Thief 2: The Metal Age*. One can only guess what adventures await Garrett in this sequel. After all, what could possibly be more rewarding than killing a god, which is what Garrett did in the first *Thief* game?

In *Thief 2*, a new town sheriff, Gorman Truart, infringes upon Garrett's relatively normal life of crime. Truart imposes a harsh military rule over the city and its inhabitants by adding more guard patrols and removing detritus, known in more liberal societies as poor people, from the streets. The sheriff also seems to be carrying a rather powerful personal vendetta against Garrett for reasons unknown to the thief.



CAUGHT AGAIN, CONFOUND IT! Sometimes Garrett has to abandon stealth.



CAREFUL, NOW It's almost always best to avoid confrontation in *Thief 2.*

Your goal in *Thief 2* is to keep Garrett alive and well-heeled by continuing to steal for the various factions in the city. Eventually, you'll need to discover why Truart wants to kill Garrett and find out what the Keepers, Garrett's old employers, mean when they say, "Beware the Dawn of the Metal Age."

So, what is Looking Glass doing to improve upon the game? Quite a bit, according to Looking Glass Producer Steve Pearsall. "In many



OH CRAP Garrett, in a horrible mix-up, accidentally wears tap shoes instead of sneakers.



WE'VE GOT COMPANY! In case of emergency, drop a load in your pants. No, wait a minute, I mean take out the one in the middle then make a break for it. Smells better, too.

ways, *Thief: The Dark Project* was an experimental title for us," says Pearsall. "We were not sure if the stealth-based gameplay dynamic would be strong enough to carry an entire game, so we covered our bases by adding some levels where the gameplay was based on adventure, exploration, and some jumping puzzles.

"With the feedback we've gotten from our fans as well as the market's response to *Thief*, we realized that stealth-based gameplay is appealing to a great number of people. We are designing *Thief 2* to take stealth-based gameplay to new levels."

Pearsall also mentions that Looking Glass has made wholesale changes to the mission structure in *Thief 2*. "In general, we've tried to design the missions in *Thief 2* to provide the player with a lot more opportunities to scout ahead—in other words, to case the joint," he says. "This design will allow players the opportunity to study the situation they must deal with, develop a strategy, and then carry it out, leading to more strategic gameplay."

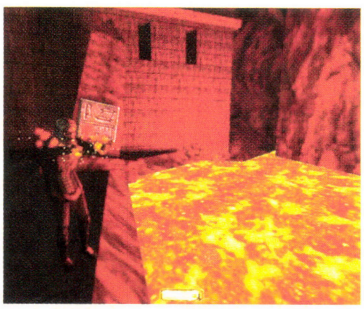


ANDROGYNOUS ENCHANTER: Or should I say enchantress?

The *Thief* series features a serial storyline that is far more creative and involved than most similar adventure titles, but Pearsall is not ready to let fans in on anything just yet. "We have a lot of really cool plot twists planned, so we don't want to ruin anyone's enjoyment by revealing too much detail in advance."

Thief 2: The Metal Age looks to start where *Thief: The Dark Project* left off—with an innovative gaming premise that stresses patience and problem solving over quick reflexes and instant gratification.

Hey, maybe it will even cause *Quake* fans to put down the rocket launcher and put on the moccasins for a while—or at least until the next DeathMatch LAN game gets started again.



FIRE AND BRIMSTONE: Colored lighting makes for some damn pretty lava.

HOW THE PROS DO IT

You Fargin' Sneaky Bastage!

Sometimes it's wiser to slip by unnoticed than to duke it out. And sometimes it's wiser to run away while squealing like a schoolgirl.

We all know that Garrett, the master burglar from the *Thief* series, is a pretty proficient pilferer. But no matter how good a thief Garrett is, he still has his bad days (such as when he is eviscerated by the guards). So, to whom does Garrett look for inspiration when his stealing self-esteem is low? We think we know:

Steals From the Rich and Gives to the Poor



Robin Hood

SHOOTING STAR

Name: Robin Hood

Nickname: "The Prince of Thieves"

Claim to Fame: Sneaks into rich folks' castles and steals their gold and gals.

Stealthy Ability: Changes form to avoid being detected by the law.

Steals From the Poor and Gives to the Rich



Richard Nixon

SHOOTING STAR

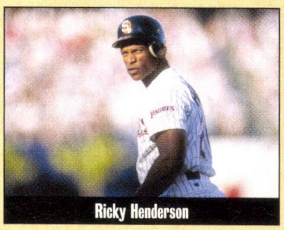
Name: Richard Nixon

Nickname: "Tricky Dick"

Claim to Fame: Sneaking into Democrats' HQ.

Stealthy Ability: Good at hiding stuff on tape...or not. Note: Nixon was known more as a crook than a thief, but what the hell.

Steals From the Pitch and Gives to the Fans



Ricky Henderson

ALLSPORT

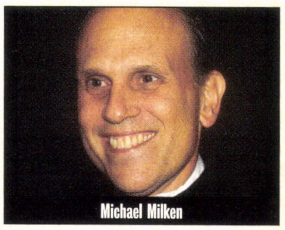
Name: Ricky Henderson

Nickname: "Rick the Quick"

Claim to Fame: Leading base stealer in MLB history.

Stealthy Abilities: Speed and intimidation of catchers and second basemen.

Steals From the Rich and Gets It From Cellmate



Michael Milken

SHOOTING STAR

Name: Michael Milken

Nickname: "The Junk Bond King"

Claim to Fame: Created $200 billion junk bond market.

Stealthy Abilities: Hiding money in high-yield bonds to allow entrepreneurs to borrow on an amazing scale. Unfortunately for Mike, he wasn't stealthy enough. He went to jail.

Other Abilities: Extremely proficient at buying call girls for his top clients.

The Moral of the Story? Don't Get Caught

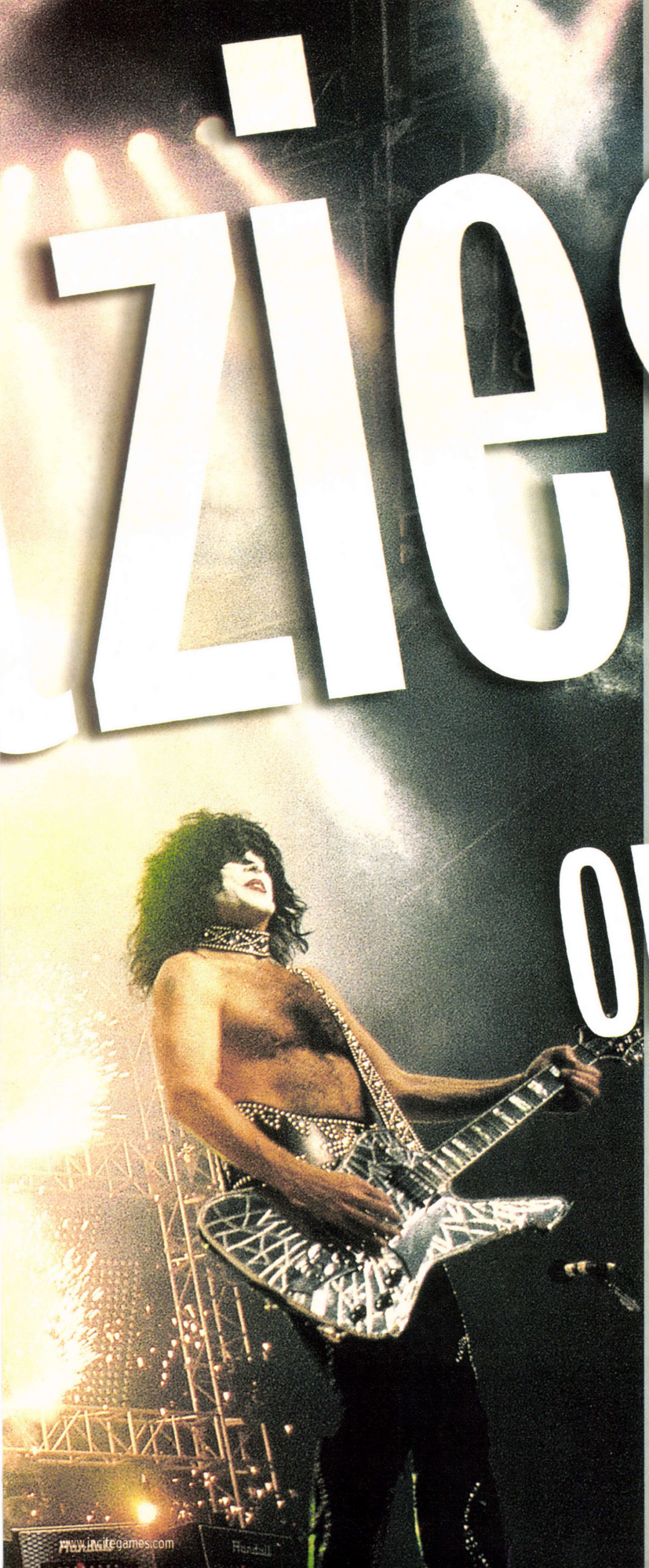


THE Cra

IT'S ON THE CD!
Check out the video on the *incite CD-ROM!*

ziest SHOW ON EARTH

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MCGEE



You Wanted the Best and You Got the Best, the Hottest Game in the World: **KISS!**

KISS fans and action gamers the world over can't wait to whip out their love guns and kill some monsters in the upcoming shooter *KISS Psycho Circus The Nightmare Child.* In this *incite PC Gaming* exclusive, we get the scoop on the game directly from the Developer Third Law Interactive. These guys aren't content with just putting out your run-of-the-mill *Quake II* knock-off with the KISS logo slapped on the box. They've been rockin' and rollin' every day and coding every night to bring gamers the best 3D shooter anyone's seen since *Doom.*

BY JOE VALLINA

How can a KISS game not have happened before now? C'mon, the band has four outrageous characters that have special powers, for Pete's sake. Not to mention the fact that KISS' media empire draws dollars like Gene Simmons' tongue draws groupies. Making a game about the "hottest band in the world" seems like a no brainer. But when the Gathering of Developers and Third Law Interactive decided to give it a go, they found that a KISS game had its share of challenges.

"We didn't want to make a KISS game where you just went around shooting rockets out of guitars and licking people with Gene's tongue," says Third Law Interactive 3D Artist Ronn Harbin. Instead, the folks at Third Law decided to borrow story elements and characters from the popular Todd McFarlane comic book series, *KISS Psycho Circus.* The result is the first-person shooter *KISS Psycho Circus The Nightmare Child,* a game that establishes itself as a brand-new chapter in the KISS mythos.



IS THAT YOU? Paul's persona, the Starbearer, is just as vain as his alter-ego.

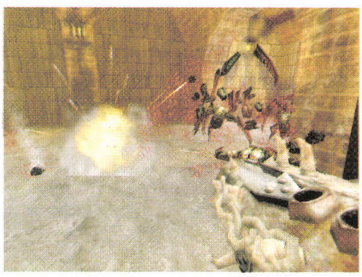


CALLING DR. LOVE These Headless are gonna need a doctor after I'm done blasting 'em.

Creatures of the Night

Somewhere deep within its demented big top of the Psycho Circus, The Nightmare Child is about to be born. It's your character's job to keep this from happening. To succeed on your mission, you'll progress through several different worlds and along the way slowly gather costume pieces from each member of KISS. These costumes will empower you with otherworldly weapons and abilities that you'll need when confronting the strange creatures in this sick sideshow.

Exactly who is on the *Psycho Circus* guest list? Some of the villainous creations that Third Law has come up with include the Unipsycho, a crazed unicycle-riding demon who spouts fire from his dome; Stumps, weird, dog-like creatures; the Ballbuster, a guy who shoots cannonballs out of his arm; and massive hordes of Headless, spidery insectoids that seem to keep coming and coming....



WIPED OUT Gene's blaster arm takes no bug prisoners. No need for the Orkin man.

In fact, the horde-type monsters were something that the developers at Third Law had been trying to get back into gaming since the *Doom* days.

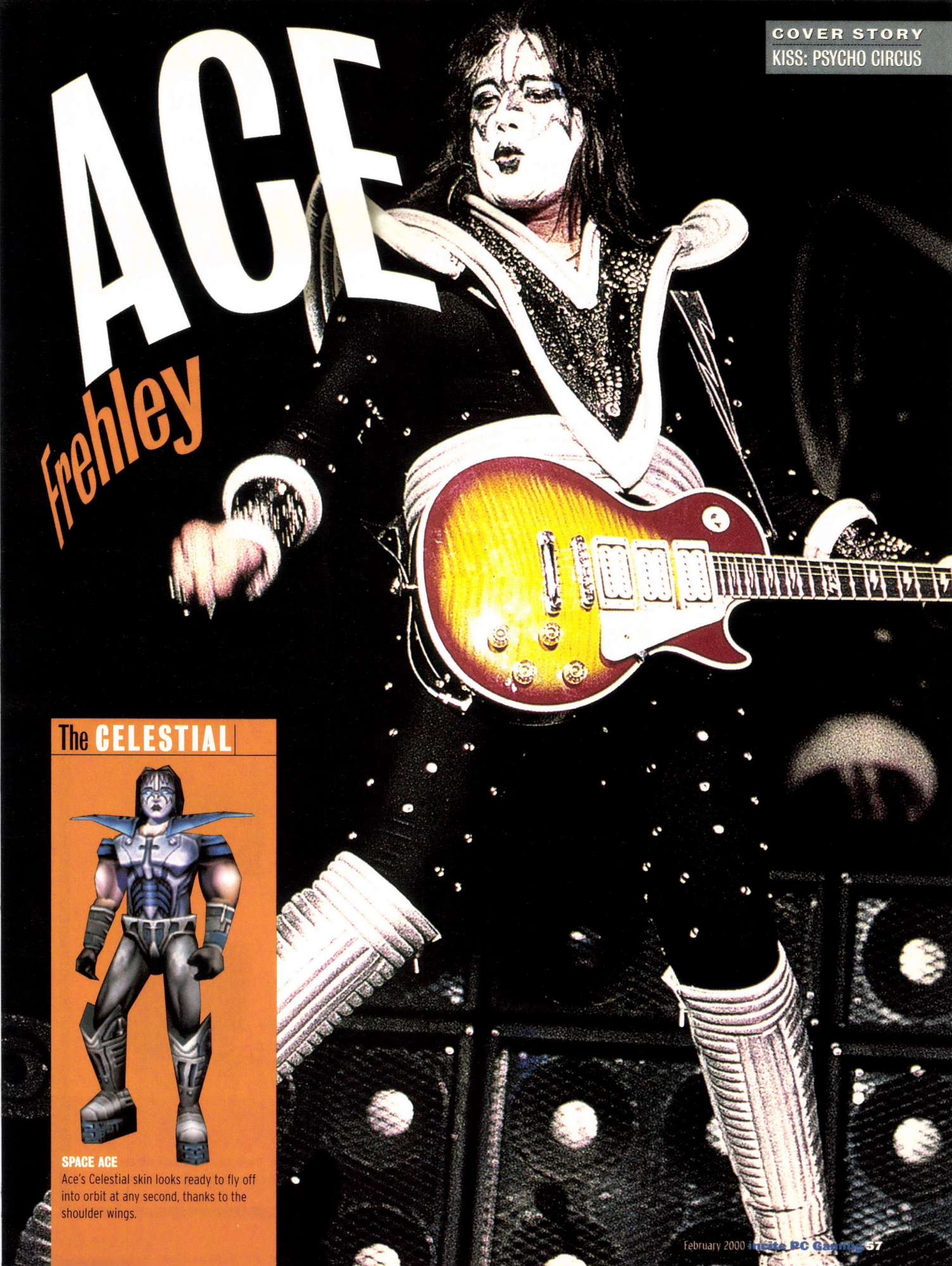
World Builder and Level Designer Matt Hooper explains, "It's been a long time since gamers have seen a seemingly endless stream of monsters coming at them on-screen. The reason for this is that, up until now, computers just couldn't handle that amount of polygons on the screen at once without gameplay slowing to a halt. By using the Lithtech engine in conjunction with careful character placement, we've been able to avoid those types of slowdowns."

Monsters seem to be crawling out of every open crevice in the darkened levels, swarming over your character in gruesome waves.

The result, as anyone who has seen the game can attest, is amazing. Monsters seem to be crawling out of every open crevice in the darkened levels, swarming over your character in gruesome waves of shiver-inducing legs and fangs. Simply put, it's scary as hell.

"The horde creatures in the game aren't that hard to kill really," explains Hooper. "But the real

ACE Frehley



The CELESTIAL

SPACE ACE
Ace's Celestial skin looks ready to fly off into orbit at any second, thanks to the shoulder wings.

challenge is in how you choose to deal with them, as they keep coming at you from all directions. You have to be on your toes at all times."

While the horde creatures may be easy to dispatch, Hooper says that the game will also have more than its fair share of tough boss monsters and horrible mixed-up creations. These include the dreaded Arachniclown, which looks like what you'd get if you tossed a tub of tarantulas and Shakes the Clown into a giant blender and set it to "horrify."

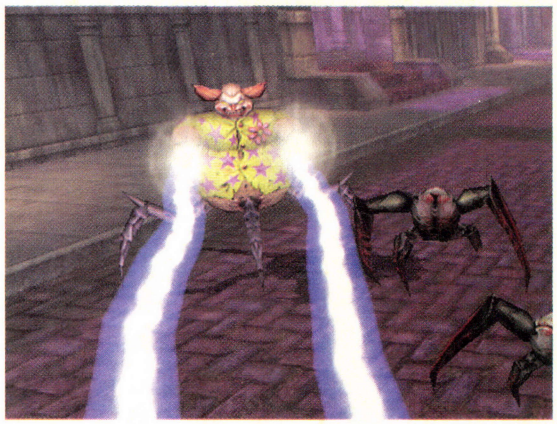
Gods of Thunder

And what of the KISS characters themselves? They are in the game, says Hooper, but not in the same way that many fans might expect.

"The McFarlane comic books do a good job of turning the KISS characters into heroes, and we took our inspiration from those comics when we decided how to put the KISS guys in the game," says Hooper.

There is no band called KISS in *Psycho Circus The Nightmare Child.* Rather, as in the comic book series, Gene, Paul, Ace, and Peter are represented as the four Elders: Demon, Starbearer, Celestial, and Beastmaster, respectively.

These characterizations should come as little surprise to long-time KISS fans, and in keeping with the



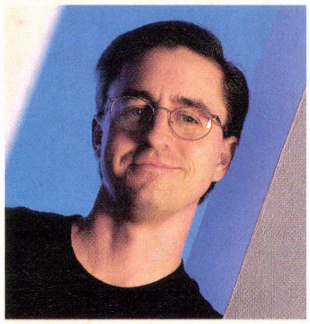
SHOCK ME The Arachniclown takes great pride and pleasure in "putting on his black leather" and shocking me.

It's in the DESIGN

Third Law Interactive Has Come a Long Way Since Its *Daikatana* Days

The core of Third Law Interactive's design team started out at Ion Storm as the original *Diakatana* design team. Sensing impending trouble, the group voted to leave, formed Third Law, and immediately started work on *KISS Psycho Circus The Nightmare Child.* They haven't looked back since.





STRUTTERS Third Law Interactive's Ronn Harbin (top) and Matt Hooper.



DALLAS SQUARES (Clockwise from top left) Jonathan Wright, Adam Hayek, Dave Namaksy, Matt Hooper, Will Loconto, Mike Maynard, Mark Morgan, Pam Wolford, Ronn Harbin, Steve Rescoe, (center) Andy Chang.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAJAT GOSH

Stanley PAUL

The STARBEARER



PURPLE POWER
Paul's Starbearer skin looks way more buff than we've ever seen the Starchild look. This lover means business.

Creative EYE

Todd McFarlane's Comic Inspiration

The Third Law Interactive design team found that Todd McFarlane's *KISS Psycho Circus* comic series was the perfect inspiration for their game. By taking certain story elements from the comic series (such as the concept of the band members as Elders), Third Law found a ready-made foundation for the game's storyline.

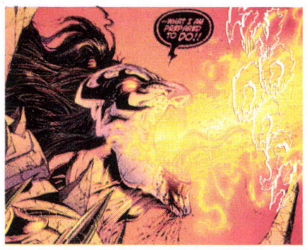




PHOTO COURTESY OF TODD MCFARLANE ENTERTAINMENT

MR. SPEED Todd McFarlane poses with the band.

There might be special hidden areas in the game based on members of KISS who aren't in the band anymore.

theme, each member of the band with have his own signature colors and will preside over different elements in time and space. Demon rules over a red-themed world of fire, the Starbearer will exist in the purple-tinted water world, Celestial is in the blue-tinged virtual world, and Beastmaster's green realm teems with jungle life.

Love Guns

To go along with each character's special looks and attributes, your character will gain access to new weapons as you make your way through the worlds in search of the evil Nightmare Child. While these are still in development as of this writing, we do know that Starbearer has a special water cannon, the Beastmaster's whip delivers a powerful crack as it snaps monster heads from their bodies, and the Demon has a giant dragon who rides along on his shoulder, giving anyone who crosses our winged friend a bad dose of flaming halitosis.

The design team opted to use dynamic, original music for the game, rather than a KISS soundtrack. Third Law felt that by crafting the music in-house, it would be customized to further set the mood of the levels in a way pre-recorded music never could. But long-time KISS fans needn't worry, there will be many a KISS song and Easter egg in *Psycho Circus The Nightmare Child.*

Hooper explains, "When a KISS fan goes into a certain level, such as the Roadhouse, and sees a jukebox, he will be able to put in a coin and hear a KISS song play out of the speakers. Also, there might be special hidden areas in the game



SEE YOU IN YOUR DREAMS In true nightmare fashion, *KISS Psycho Circus The Nightmare Child's* evil creatures put a macabre spin on the already diabolical clown.



FLAMING YOUTH As if the Headless hordes weren't enough, I've got Unipsychos hurling fireballs at me. Time to literally whip some butt.

PETER Criss

The BEASTMASTER



HERE KITTY KITTY
Peter's Beastmaster skin features a green tint that's the true mark of a cat-man from the '70s.



WAR MACHINE The razor-sharp arms on these Headless cut to the bone.

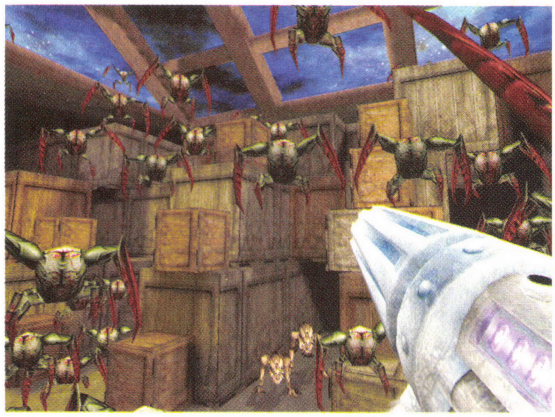
based on members of KISS who aren't in the band anymore." Hmmm. An Eric Carr level perhaps? Hooper, ever the secretive developer, wouldn't confirm or deny it.

More Than KISS and Tell

While Third Law's developer team is filled with die-hard KISS fanatics, the guys realize that not everyone is a rabid KISS Army veteran. "We wanted to make sure that gamers who weren't KISS fans would still like the game," explains Harbin. "The best way for us to do that was to make a very solid, very fun computer game."

In order to do that, Harbin and his team have worked tirelessly to build the creepiest, most intricate levels possible, and have again harked back to the days of yore when designing the game's weaponry, choosing aim-fast-and-blast-'em technology over complicated guns. The object here is to have a fast, fun, monster-killing good time, and from what we've seen, Third Law is right on track.

It looks like Third Law Interactive has more than risen to the challenge of making a KISS game that isn't pigeonholed into some cheesy, rock 'n' roll shtick. When it comes out sometime in the spring of 2000, *KISS Psycho Circus The Nightmare Child* could be one of the hottest 3D shooters in years. Hotter than Hell, in fact.



STRANGE WAYS Oh, I see that my welcoming committee has arrived. And me with just my water cannon. O boy....

The object here is to have a fast, fun, monster-killing good time.



ALMOST HUMAN Part man, part cactus, this guy gets right to the point.

Top FIVE

KISS has put out lots of albums in the past 26 years. Here's the cream of the crop.

5. Ace Frehley



While Gene and Paul were cavorting with every session musician in L.A. and Peter was plumbing the gruesome depths of '50s rock, Ace was proving that he was about more than exploding guitars.

4. Hotter Than Hell



This classic album features KISS at their grungiest. Unsung cult classics like "Goin' Blind" and "Strange Ways" make this album one of our top five.

3. Alive II



This live set showcases the band's best post-*Alive* songs, especially cuts like "Detroit Rock City" and Paul Stanley's "God of Thunder" from *Destroyer*, which was too overproduced for its own good.

2. Rock and Roll Over



Classic tracks like "Makin' Love" and the great first version of "See You in Your Dreams" make this one a definite keeper.

1. Alive!



This is the best KISS album of all time, and it also ranks among the top rock and roll albums ever made. All four album sides captured KISS at their best. The band rocks with abandon throughout.

GENE Simmons

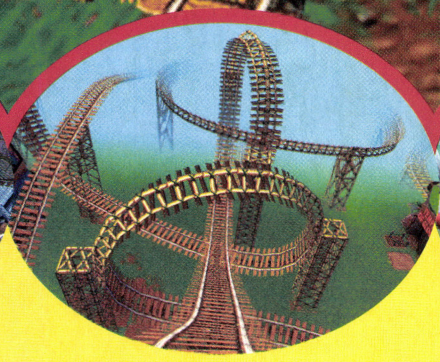
The DEMON



MEAN MACHINE
Gene's Demon skin has been changed since the game's inception. Now the Demon shows the trademarked tongue.

Aren't you going to ride it? (After all, you built it.)







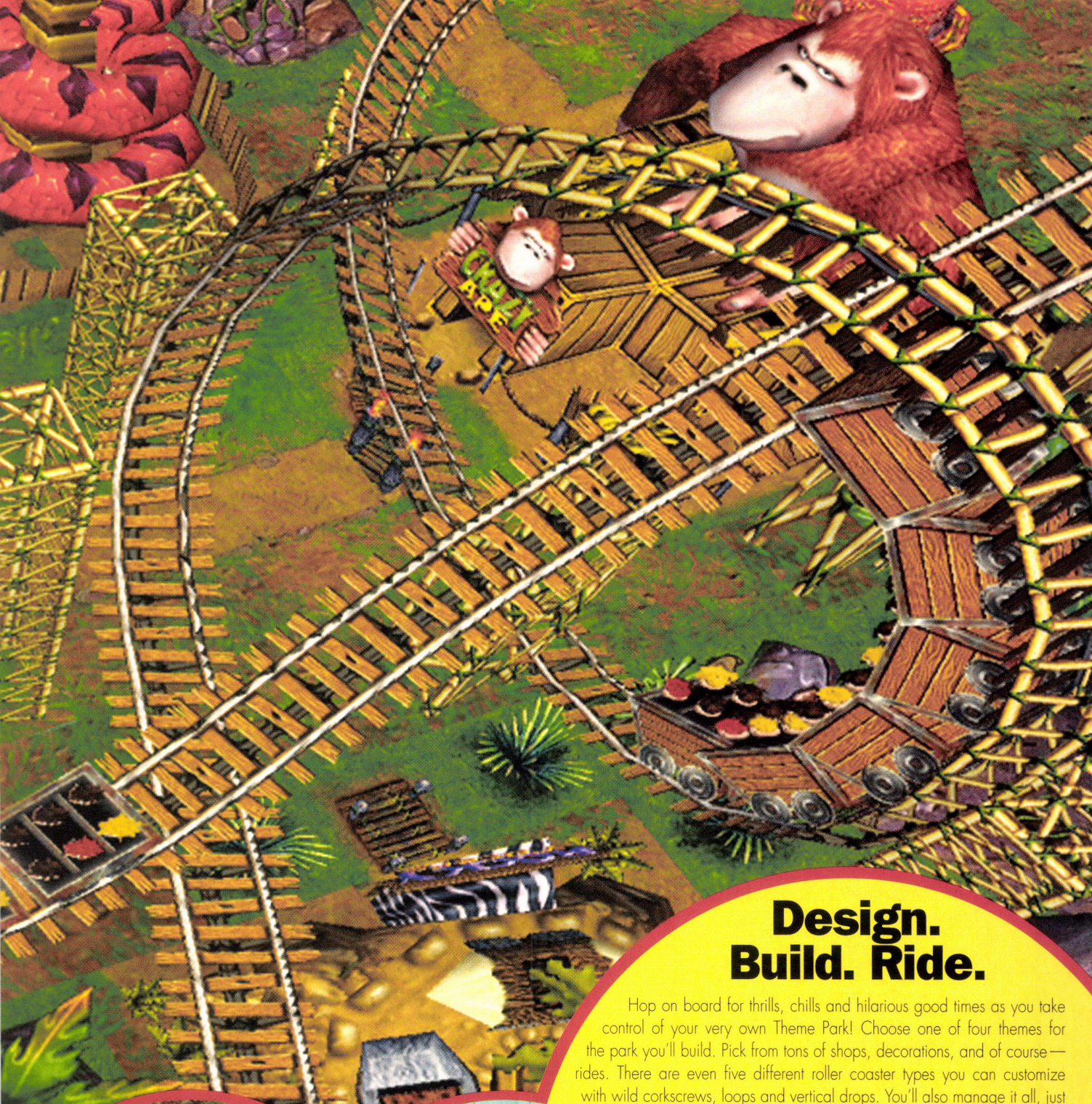
Pick your theme

Build your park

Ride the rides

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Salt the fries



Share your park online

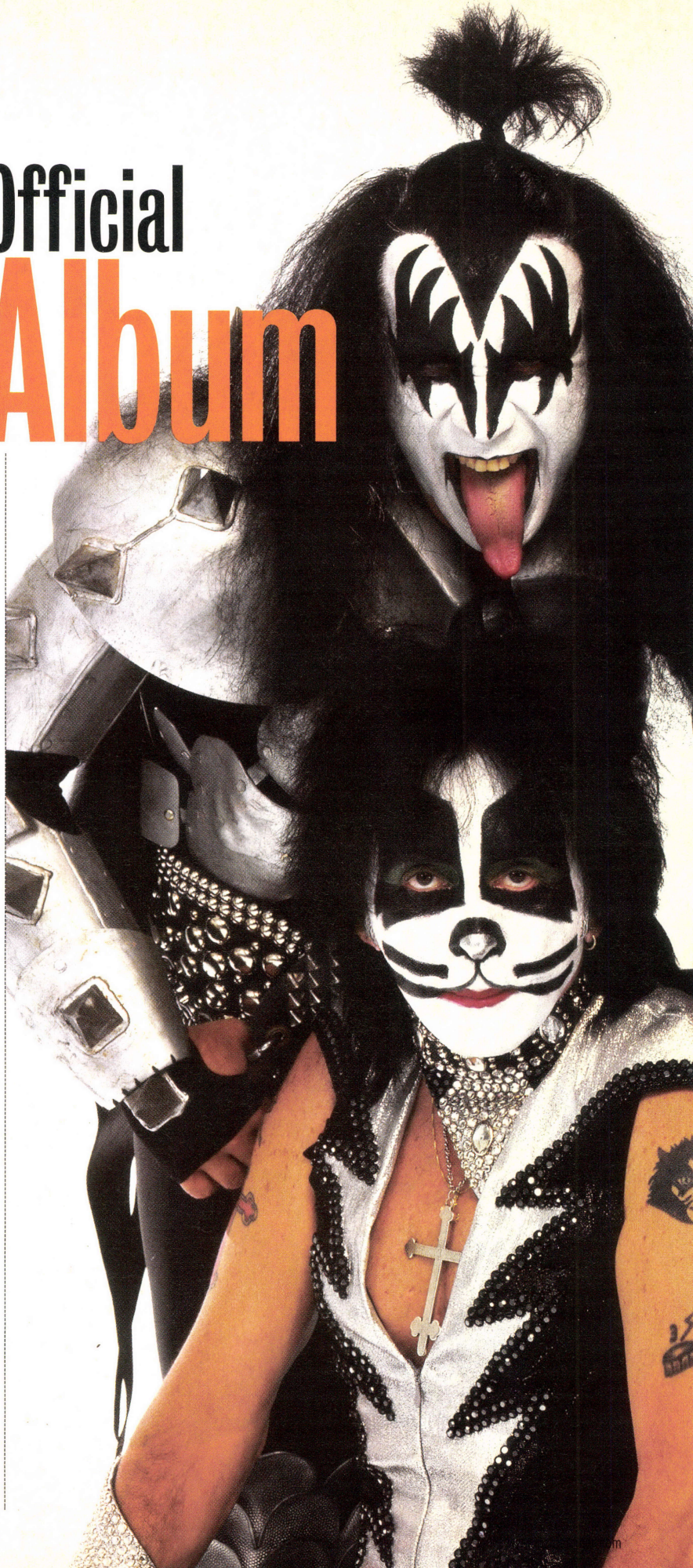
SIM Theme Park™

Win EVERY Official KISS Album

So you're a KISS fan, huh? Well prove it and you could win the **ENTIRE CATALOG OF KISS TITLES ON CD** from *incite PC Gaming.* We'll also throw in the DVD for the movie *Detroit Rock City* to make it the offer twice as sweet! What a deal!

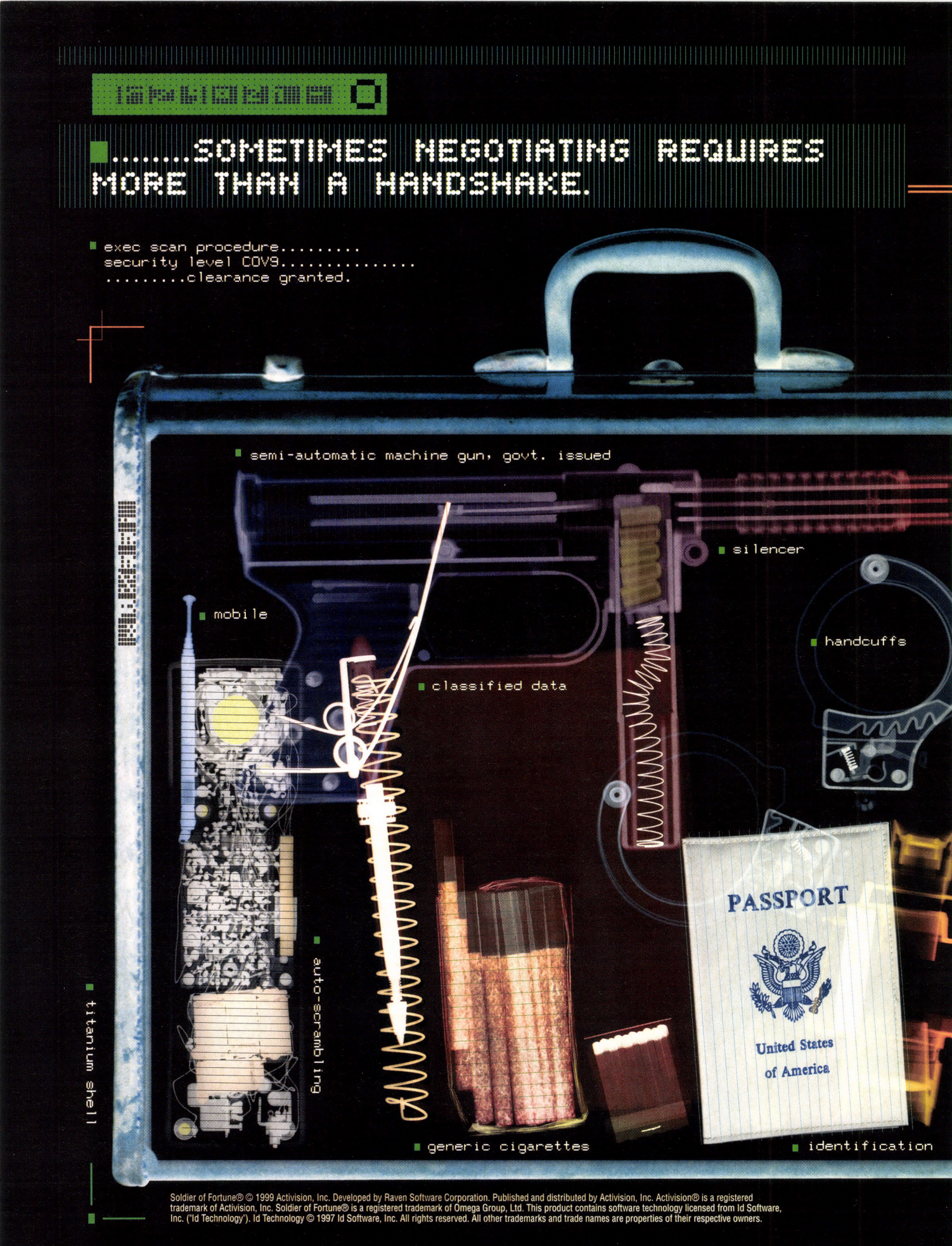
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A total of 28 CDs will be awarded ($450 Retail Price). A random drawing of all correct answers to award all prizes will be held on or about March 17, 2000 from all eligible entries received by February 29, 2000. The odds of winning depend upon the number of eligible entries received. Only one entry per person is accepted. You may enter accessing our Web site or printing your name and address and the correct answer on a postcard and mailing it to ATTN: KISS Contest, 650 Townsend Suite 305, San Francisco, CA 94103. The contest is open to all legal U.S. residents, except for the employees and immediate family of the Sponsor, the prize manufacturers, their affiliates, subsidiaries, advertising agencies, or any other company involved with the design, production, execution or distribution of the drawings. Persons under the age of 18 require parental consent to participate. Any tax liability is solely the responsibility of the winner. All federal, state, local, and municipal and provincial laws and regulations apply. Sponsor shall be deemed sole interpreter of the rules and conditions. By participating, entrants acknowledge and agree to be bound by these rules and the decisions of the Sponsor are final. Void in the states of Florida and New York and where prohibited by law. Prize components are not exchangeable, transferable, or redeemable for cash. Prices shown are estimated retail prices, actual prices may vary. The Sponsor does not make and is not responsible for any warranty (including fitness for particular purposes) or guarantee with regards to any prize or portion thereof. All sweepstakes entries become the property of the Sponsor and will not be returned. In the event of unavailability of stated prize(s) or component(s) thereof, Sponsor reserves the right to substitute item(s) of comparable value.

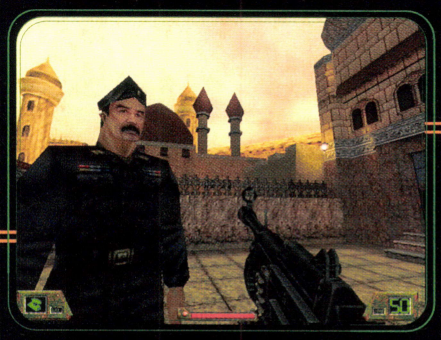





KISS
KISS
LOVE GUN
KISS
ALIVE
III
GREATEST
KISS
KISS
SOCCER CHAMPION
PSYCHO-CIRCUS
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KILLERS
KISS
ASYLUM
KISS

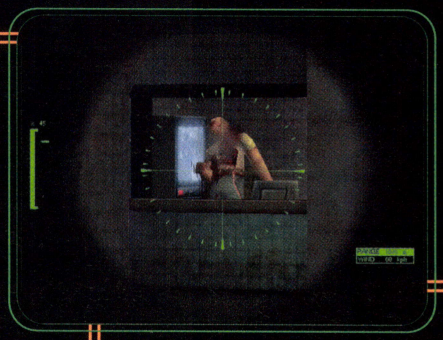


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■ Saddam's Baghdad Palace

■ Sniper View in Kosovo



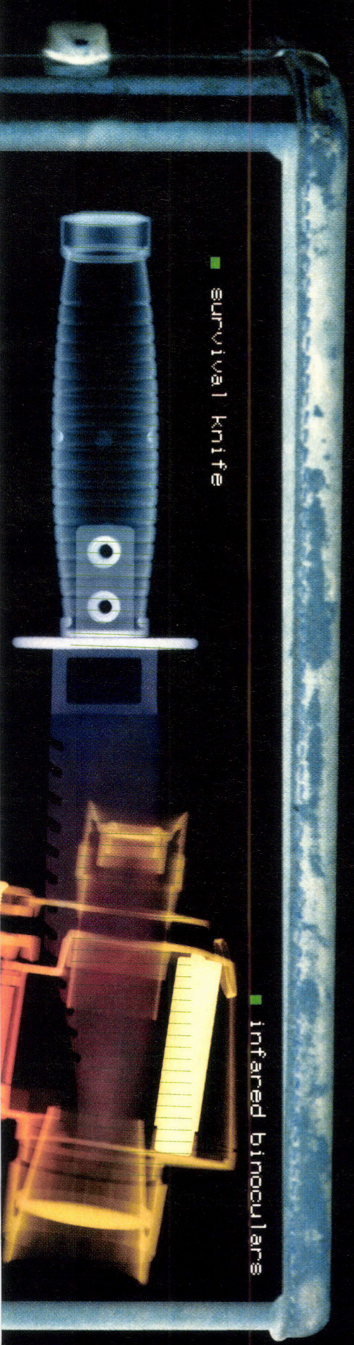
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The Troopers

Iron Maiden has reunited with singer Bruce Dickenson and guitarist Adrian Smith, but what's this about a new computer game?



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MSO

WHERE'S EDDIE? It took a while for Bruce Dickenson (third from left) to warm up to *Ed Hunter*.

When most rock bands get back together with their ex-lead singers or guitar players, they usually celebrate with a big comeback tour. But when Iron Maiden welcomed both vocalist Bruce Dickinson and guitarist Adrian Smith back to the fold recently, they not only launched the requisite reunion tour, they also released a video game as well, the arcade-style shooter *Ed Hunter*. But as Bruce explains, the game was actually a long time coming.

By Paul Semel

Bruce, just to clear up any confusion, how does your return to the band relate to the release of *Ed Hunter*?

As I was leaving the band in '93, they were about to start development of a computer game called *Melt*. But that got canned because it sucked. It was worse than *Super*



Mario Brothers with stick-figure animation. So along came Synthetic Dimensions, who redid the whole game concept and said, "Let's make it a really simple game and really cool for Iron Maiden fans." Which is exactly what they did—they made an arcade game. And it was completed, more or less, by the time I rejoined the band.

What did you think when you saw it?
I was actually dreading it, but because it was so simple and so straightforward, I actually quite warmed to it. It works because the guys at Synthetic Dimensions are huge Iron Maiden fans, so they understood everything to do with Eddie and the band.

I'm a big fan of *SimEarth* and *SimCity*, and stuff like that. And I have most of the flight sims too.

Are you into computer games yourself?
When I was a kid, I used to belong to the local wargaming society and had armies and armies of toy soldiers that refought the Battle of Waterloo on Sunday afternoons. So that translates directly into simulation games and stuff like that. I'm a big fan of *SimEarth* and *SimCity*, and stuff like that. And I have most of the flight sims too.

Which makes sense, given that you're a pilot [on Maiden's U.S. tour last year, Bruce flew himself from show to show]. Speaking of which, do you find most flight sims to be realistic?
No. There are some realistic ones, but they're made for training real pilots. There is an amazing program called *747 400 Precision Flight Simulator*, which is a fully functional 747 cockpit in which every single knob and switch works.

But when you're training someone in something like instrument flying, where you don't see the ground, you don't need any scenery, you just need a faithful reproduction of the controls.

Finally, are there any plans to do an *Ed Hunter* sequel?
Not immediately. We're working on the next album and the next tour. However, after the tour, we might take some considerable time before doing something else, and during that period of time, we'd certainly be open to offers.



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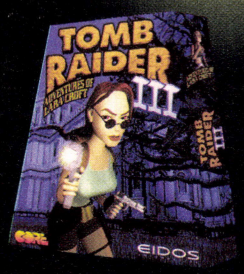
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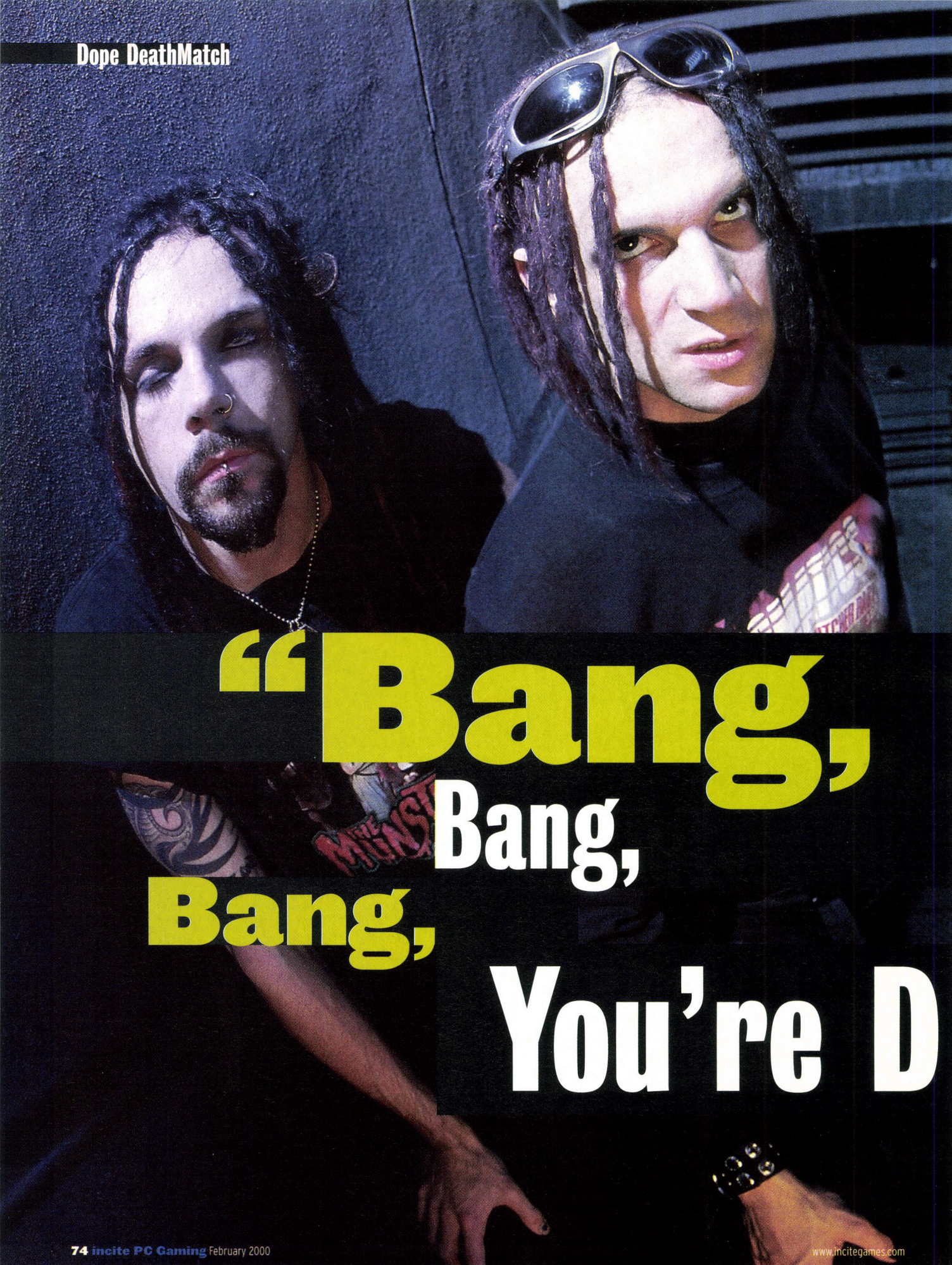
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"Bang, Bang, Bang, You're D



BY PAUL SEMEL PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAJAT GHOSH



ead!"

Can being a card-carrying member of the N.R.A. help a **Dope** rock star win at **Unreal Tournament?**

Listening to their music, it's not likely that anyone will expect the guys in the hard-rock band Dope to be gun-shy. Especially not if you've heard their song "Sick," the chorus of which goes, "Bang, bang, bang, in your head/Bang, bang, bang, you're dead f—er." If anything, you'd think these guys were big fans of first-person shooting games, especially ones with deathmatches.

Which is why we pitted the band members against each other in the deathmatch-only game *Unreal Tournament*. Coming into the *incite PC Gaming* game lab, the five Dope fiends were eager to kick the crap out of each other by any means necessary. But while they all hoped to emerge victorious, they also seemed to think that Keyboardist Simon Dope had a distinct, perhaps even unfair, advantage over his bandmates. Thanks, of course, to his membership in the National Rifle Association.



The Combatants:

Edsel Dope

Vocals and Rhythm Guitars

How long have you been playing video games? "Since I was four."

Favorite video games: Sports games: wrestling, football, and basketball

Favorite shooting game: Sniper

Who do you think will win? "I'm betting on Preston or my brother, Simon. I think me, Acey, and Tripp are gonna get torn up."



Simon Dope

Keyboards

How long have you been playing video games? "Since I was six."



Favorite video games: *Missile Command*

Favorite shooting game: *Missile Command*

Who do you think will win? "I'd put my money on me."

Acey Slade

Bass

How long have you been playing video games? "Since I was eight years old."

Favorite video games: *Asteroids*

Favorite shooting game: *Area 51*

Who do you think will win? "Probably Preston or Simon. I think I'm probably going to finish second."



Preston Nash

Drums

How long have you been playing video games? "About 15 minutes."



Favorite video games: *Centipede*

Favorite shooting game: *Centipede*

Who do you think will win? "Uh, me."

Tripp Eisen

Lead guitars

How long have you been playing video games? "Well, I played when I was a kid, but not much lately."

Favorite video games: *Missile Command, Q*Bert*

Favorite shooting game: "The Simpsons arcade game."

Who do you think will win? "Simon. He's the N.R.A. guy."





Level: Peak

Weapon available: ASMD shock rifle

This level had the guys falling to their deaths almost as often as they were shot, prompting Edsel to exclaim, "I thought this was a shooting game. I'm my own worst enemy." By the end of the match, though, the guys were taking great delight in blowing each other into little bloody bits.

Final Scores:

WHO:	FRAGS:	DEATHS:
Edsel	10	1
Simon	6	4
Acey	4	7
Tripp	1	4
Preston	0	6

"I f—ed everybody up. I slaughtered them, I kicked their p—y asses. Sissies."—*Simon*

Level: Oblivion

Weapon available: ASMD shock rifle

Faced with a crushing defeat, Preston declared, "I should've spent more time playing computer games, like these guys." But unlike an AA meeting, admitting you have a shooting problem isn't the first step to solving it, as evidenced by the number of times the drummer was shot in the chest.

Final Scores:

WHO:	FRAGS:	DEATHS:
Simon	10	4
Edsel	9	4
Acey	7	6
Tripp	6	8
Preston	2	11

"I think this is a sign of me and my brother growing up in white trash Florida."—*Simon*



Round 3

Level: Conveyor
Weapon available: ASMD shock rifle

Having drawn first blood from his brother, it wasn't long before Edsel embarked on a long killing spree. This came to an end, though, when his brother Simon's good luck charm came into play. Preston finally climbed out of the gutter this game!

Final Scores:

WHO:	FRAGS:	DEATHS:
Simon	10	6
Edsel	8	3
Tripp	7	4
Preston	3	7
Acey	-2	8

[On winning again] "It's fantastic."—*Simon*

Round 4

Level: Codex of Wisdom
Weapons available: All

There was still some confusion as to which gun did what. Edsel complained about the Enforcer's inability to kill people on contact, noting, "I shot Simon with my f—ing pistol six times and I watched blood spurt out of his head while he just sat there and looked at me."

Final Scores:

WHO:	FRAGS:	DEATHS:
Simon	10	5
Tripp	5	3
Edsel	5	6
Acey	2	4
Preston	1	7

"I understand weapons. Why? I am a member of the N.R.A. I know what kills."—*Simon*

Final Thoughts:

Edsel
Overall: "It's a great game where you get to blow stuff away."
Graphics: "I think the graphics are great, it's very realistic."
Sound: "I wish there was more of a groove going on underneath."
Was there anyone whose performance surprised you? "I thought Preston was going to be the s—, but he got his ass kicked over and over."

Simon
Overall: "It's definitely an adrenaline rush. My heart would race when I'd see other people."
Graphics: "The characters were a little blocky, but I like that because it makes them look tougher."
Sound: "The sound was great. And the Homer Simpson scream, 'aaaugh,' was amusing."
Was there anyone whose performance surprised you? "I actually thought that Preston was going to be a little better, only because he's kind of tough."

Acey
Overall: "I thought it was rad. I thought it was really cool."
Graphics: "They were really good."
Sound: "I liked how you could hear a firefight breaking out."
Was there anyone whose performance surprised you? "Yeah, I thought Preston was going to be a lot better. He's just the kind of guy who'd go postal."

Preston
Overall: "The game is great."
Graphics: "Great. Incredible."
Sound: "The sounds really bring you into the game."
Was there anyone whose performance surprised you? "Yeah, me. I thought I was going to do a little bit better than I did."

Tripp
Overall: "Awesome. How much does it cost and how can I get one?"
Graphics: "Excellent."
Sound: "The sound was awesome."
Was there anyone whose performance surprised you? "Yeah, Preston. But I knew Simon and Edsel would be good."

Dope's debut album is called *Felons and Revolutionaries*. Visit them at **www.dopeonline.com.**

THE SECOND PLACE CAR DOESN'T GET









EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PC

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PRESSURE DROP

We Talk to the Man Behind **Roller Coaster Tycoon**, the Biggest, Baddest Theme Park Game in Town

UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

- **WHAT PERSONAL TRAIT DO YOU HATE MOST ABOUT YOU?** I can't remember people's names.
- **WHAT WOULD YOU BUY FOR ONE MILLION DOLLARS?** A roller coaster and a yard large enough to put it in!
- **IF YOU WEREN'T A GAME DESIGNER WHAT WOULD YOU BE?** Unemployed probably.
- **LAST COMPUTER GAME PLAYED:** *Lego Loco.*
- **FAVORITE THEME PARK:** Oakwood Park, Wales (UK).
- **FAVORITE WEB SITE:** http://schwarzkopf.coaster.net/
- **FAVORITE HOBBY:** Anything except playing computer games!



WHO WOULDA THUNK IT? The non-violent *Roller Coaster Tycoon* was a monster hit.

Chris Sawyer is a busy, busy man. He's pretty much a one-man show when it comes to programming and designing his own computer games, and when he isn't doing that he's...well, he doesn't seem to do much else. Which suits him just fine.

His latest game, *Roller Coaster Tycoon,* is a multimillion-dollar seller, and the profits from the game's success go right back into financing the next game.

So do you like going to theme parks?
Yes. I'm fascinated by roller coasters and I've visited many parks. I don't think I've ever been to a park I didn't like. If it's got at least one roller coaster, I like it!

What do you think is the secret of *Roller Coaster Tycoon's* success?
A combination of three things: First, the game is all about building things, which is something that appeals to most people. Second, the detail and atmosphere in the game draw the players into it and make them want to nurture their little theme park, keep it running smoothly, and keep their little people happy. Third, the subject matter. Amusement parks and roller coasters are all about people having fun.

In the current climate of games full of killing and violence, here's one game where the objective is a good one, to build a successful park where everyone enjoys themselves!

***Roller Coaster Tycoon* should have made you a really rich man. How do you spend your money?**
Because my company is totally independent, most of the profits go straight back into funding development of the next game. I don't want to allow a publisher or anyone else to influence what kind of games I produce, so that means I can't seek external funding. I have to finance all the projects myself. Of course, when I've had enough of games programming there should be a fair amount of money available, but I'm not planning to retire just yet.

You live in Scotland. Is it because you're Scottish and you like to live a quiet life?
I wasn't born in Scotland, but I've lived here for the past 20 years. I like living here. Less traffic on the roads, less pollution, it's quieter, and the people are friendlier.

What inspired you to design *Roller Coaster Tycoon?*
My own personal interest in roller coasters started it all. I took some code I originally wrote for a sequel to *Transport Tycoon* and modified it to handle very basic roller coasters. Of course, the game has changed significantly since then, but that's how it started.



FRONT ROW Here, Chris Sawyer is engaged in some grueling "research."

How much research did you do for the game? Did you feel that the game must offer realism?

I never feel like I do enough research. I would have liked to visit more parks and roller coasters during the development of the game, but I didn't have enough time.

I worked out much of the technical side of roller coasters and running parks from first principals, which probably was a good way to do it, as then the game doesn't follow somebody else's view on the best way to run a park. As for realism, I wanted the game to look toy-like, but with rides and coasters that could be recognized from the real world.

I don't think a game should strive to be photo-realistic. I much prefer a game to definitely look and feel slightly removed from the real world, a bit like a cartoon.

Have you had any advisors for all the details of roller coaster building?

I've done most of my research from books as well as visiting parks and getting to know the intricacies of roller coasters firsthand. Very late in the project, I got in touch with John Wardley, who designed many well-known roller coasters and other rides in Europe. His expertise and viewpoints were invaluable.

A lot of *Roller Coaster Tycoon* players are wondering why trees aren't cut automatically when you build a ride. Why did you decide to do that?

Two reasons: First, it was too complicated to remove all obstacles, including adjusting the land automatically, while building a pre-designed ride. Secondly, removing trees is rarely a good thing in the game because it costs money and it lowers the excitement of rides and the general look and ambience of the theme park.

Some of the early scenarios were designed with very few trees, so trees are rarely a problem. By the time the player reaches the more tree-laden scenarios later on, they should be experienced enough to custom-design their roller coasters so they take advantage of the trees rather than just bulldozing everything in sight. Just like in the real world, tree removal is rarely desirable, and it's far better to plan your park to remove as few trees as possible.

More processing power and improved hardware might open up new possibilities for a sequel to *Roller Coaster Tycoon.*

What about a *Roller Coaster Tycoon* landscape editor? Do you have plans to create one?

There are too many problems with creating a reliable landscape/scenario editor, so it's unlikely one will ever be released. The data format used in the game isn't designed to handle unlimited scenarios, and the existing scenarios had to be carefully created to work within the constraints of the game engine.

How likely is a *Roller Coaster Tycoon 2*?

At the moment, I see *Roller Coaster Tycoon* plus the expansion pack as the ultimate version of the game, given the current technology and power of PCs. More processing power and improved hardware might open up new possibilities for a sequel to *Roller Coaster Tycoon*, though. I would never rule it out.

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I. *** SUPER-TERRORISM AND THE MANIPULATION OF THE HUMAN SPECIES.

I.Since the 1990's, technology available to terrorists has improved, the scope of their destruction has expanded. [redacted] Sources say Deus Ex was created by Ion Storm to uncover the truth. Some say it's merely the latest conspiracy fueled by a madman. And some say it's a future training tool made to look like a hyperrealistic 3-D roleplaying computer game. Whatever it is, proceed with caution. They know you want it.

II. A recent pandemic, popularly referred to as the "Gray Death", has made an already chaotic world situation even worse. According to a report by the Federal Disease Control Center, it is the worst virus since AIDS. It is not yet known what compounds make up this deadly virus, but current data shows [redacted] are likely candidates. Ambrosia, the virus' stabilizer, has been linked to VersaLife. What is significant about the number 12? Does UNATCO maintain control over Ambrosia distribution? [redacted] can only mean www.unatco.com.

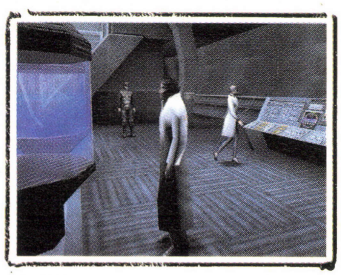


Fig. 2.5
Interact with 100's of characters.



Fig. 2.4
Do not attempt to use small arms

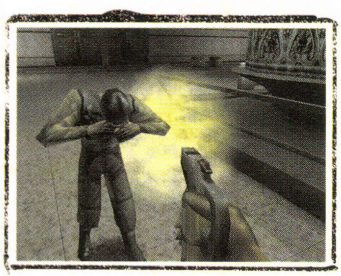
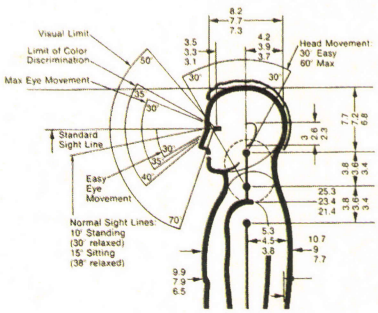


Fig. 2.3
Be a generalist or a specialist



Item No. 14428 562



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Fig. 2.2
25 weapon types known.



Fig. 2.1
Travel through New York to Hong Kong



Fig. 2.6 Advanced AI and conversation systems.
These people are real!

No. 34561

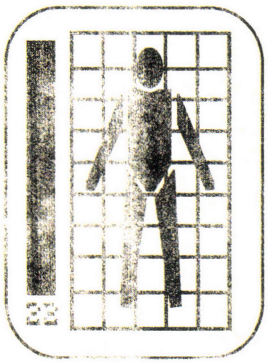
III. J.C Denton is a powerful, nano-augmented agent for an anti-terrorist organization. Little is known about this person, but it seems that he is on a mission. [redacted]. He works for UNATCO but what side he is working for is inconclusive at the moment. [redacted]

[redacted] Can he be the one to save this world from complete annihilation?

****URGENT****

MO6-MO9: Get augmentations functioning again!
[redacted]

a. Subdermal (2)
b. Cranial (1)
c. Eyes (1)
d. Torso (3)
e. Arms (1)
f. legs (1)



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Deus Ex
QUESTION EVERYTHING.

Review Nuts & Bolts

WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? | Here's the Rosetta Stone of Our Game Reviews

You don't want to waste money on crap games. Lucky for you, we play them first, so you don't have to.

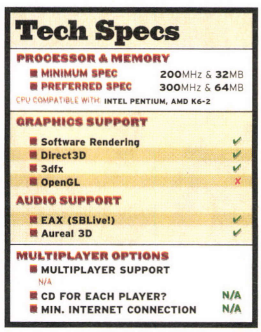
"Big deal," we hear your ever-so-jaded collective psyche say. "Every game mag does that, what makes yours any different?"

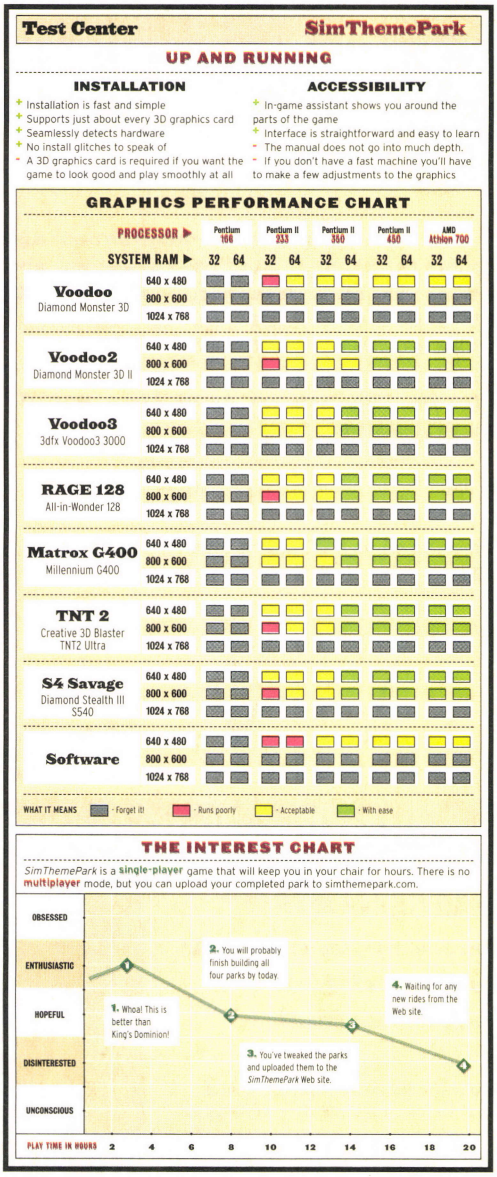
The Test Center, that's what. We test our games on five different test systems with two different RAM settings and eight different graphics card configurations at three different resolutions. That's right, pal, we're talking 240 different system configurations. Your system is guaranteed to be one of them.

Sure, that super-cool new 3D action/adventure might get five stars on a Pentium III/500MHz screamer, but what good does that do your Pentium/166MHz-using ass? Now you'll get that important little piece of info before you buy. What a concept!

Tech Specs

Here's your at-a-glance box-out of the game's requirements. We outline the minimum processor and memory requirements, CPU compatibilities, audio and graphics support, and multiplayer options. Do all players need to have a copy of the game to play multiplayer? We'll tell you here.





Up and Running

Finally, an easy-to-understand pros and cons listing of what makes a game a breeze (or utter hell) to install and play. Say goodbye to those "Why won't this damn thing install?" blues.

Graphics Performance

This is the meat and potatoes of the Test Center. Here's where you find out if your system will run that hot new game we've been raving about for months. Simply cross-reference your processor and RAM configuration with the graphics card you're using. You'll then be able to see how the game will play at three different resolutions on your computer.

If your preferred settings box is gray, you haven't got a chance in hell. If it's red, you'll likely be watching a slide show. If it's yellow, the game will run fast enough to be enjoyable, although you might see some jitters. If you're in the green, you're golden. The game will run as smooth as silk, and you will be one happy gamer.

The Interest Chart

Ever play a game that's a blast at the beginning and then about four hours in starts to feel about as fun as a third-world prison camp? So have we. That's why we devised this nifty little chart to tip you off to the point at which our interest level took a nosedive (if it ever did). We even break this up into two sections: solo play and multiplayer. Why do we take the time to do all this? Because we care.

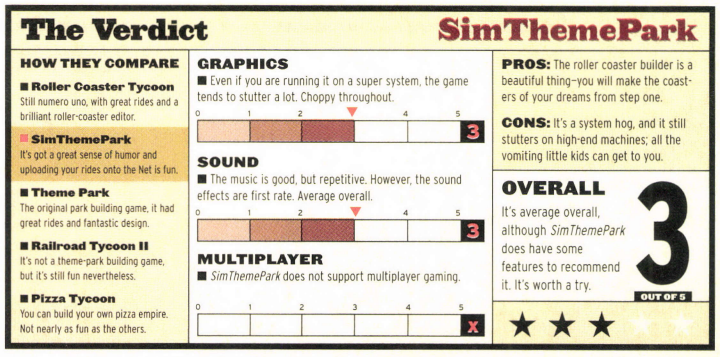
Golden Award

So what if a game is the ultimate in its genre—a true classic? Then it gets the *incite* Golden Award, the most coveted award in the computer gaming industry. Only the best can get one.



The Verdict

This is where we tell you what we think about the game. We give you all the game's pros and cons as well as an overall score (which ranges from one to five stars). Our score is honest and fair, and since it's coming from *incite PC Gaming*, you can take it as gospel, baby!



X beyond the frontier

your ultimate mission...stay alive
a space combat action game

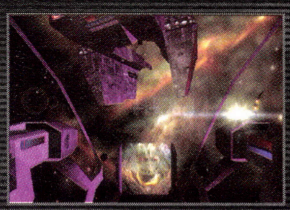
we are told that space is the final frontier now you'll need to take a step beyond...

EVENTUALLY, EVEN THE ELITE FIND THEIR MATCH

X - BEYOND THE FRONTIER COMBINES THE INTENSE LONGEVITY OF THE RENOWNED ELITE SERIES WITH THE SPECTACULAR TECHNOLOGY OF TODAY'S CONTEMPORARY GAMING. STUNNING 3D ENVIRONMENTS, EPIC BATTLES, DIPLOMACY, CONSTRUCTION, EXPLORATION AND TRADING COMBINE TO CREATE ONE OF THE LARGEST GAMES EVER.

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Best of Two Worlds

THE WHEEL OF TIME'S Ingredients Include Story, Suspense, Action, Brain-teasers, and Bugs Galore

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **GT Interactive** ■ DEVELOPER **Legend Entertainment** ■ GENRE **Action** ■ PLAYERS **1-16** ■ ESRB RATING **Mature** ■ PRICE **$49.99**

GAME GLANCE

- Two Games in One
- 40 Magic Spells
- 4 Character Classes
- 2 Editors
- 1 Excellent Story

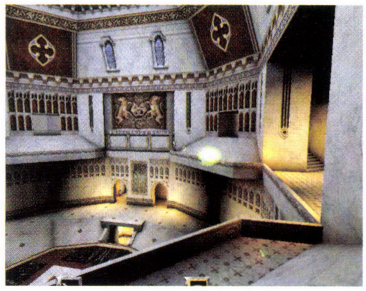
Other than *Half-Life: Opposing Force*, there's been little for first-person action fans to get excited about this year. Legend Entertainment fills the void with this stellar effort.

By Steve Klett

The Wheel of Time turns, and Ages come and pass, leaving memories that become legend. Legend fades to myth, and even myth is long forgotten when the Age that gave it birth comes again.
-Robert Jordan

So begins the narration during the opening movie in the game *The Wheel of Time*, which is fitting as hundreds of thousands of Robert Jordan fans will recognize this quote as the passage that kicks off each of the eight books in the best-selling *Wheel of Time* fantasy series. It's also one of many small touches the developer puts in to serve notice that this is much more than a me-too game with the high-priced backing of a big-name author.

It's a serious attempt to recreate a pen-and-paper fantasy world into a virtual one on your PC—and it's very, very good.



IS THERE AN ECHO IN HERE? Many of the levels are simply huge.



DRY CLEANER, PLEASE This Whitecloak's moniker no longer fits—Redcloak anyone?

However, this is not to say you must be a fan of Jordan and his tomes to enjoy the ride—heck, it's hard to blame you if you aren't, as each book is more than 600 pages long. There's no doubt you will get a lot of enjoyment out of seeing Jordan's world come to life if you have read the books, and some of the deep game story may be lost on you if you haven't. However, there's something for both crowds here to make the computer gaming trip well worth taking.

For starters, *The Wheel of Time* offers up the best of both worlds: it's got a great story that's true to Jordan's universe, and it's got tons of action. Like me, many Jordan fans are starting to lament the lack of action as the series matures. *The Wheel of Time* lets us step into the Jordan universe ourselves and fight The Dark One level-by-level, with no shortage of things flying about the screen.

The growing political nature of Jordan's books is made a bit easier to bear. For those that haven't read the books, *The Wheel of Time* offers up one of the deepest stories found in the genre—one only approached by the likes of *Half-Life* and *Jedi Knight*.

But that's not all... this story is backed by awesome visuals and really nasty characters to fight. Jordan aside, *The Wheel of Time* features one of the most well-rounded single-player experiences in some time, offering something for just about every action fan.

CATHEDRAL TOUR OF OUR VIRTUAL WORLD

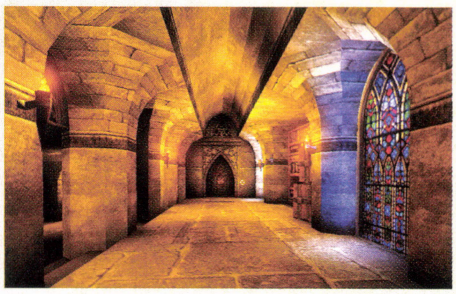
Stop 'N' Smell the Roses

Some of *Wheel of Time*'s levels are too pretty too miss. In making the levels for *Wheel of Time*, Legend enlisted the aid of actual architects, and it shows in these snapshots.

Gothic to the Max



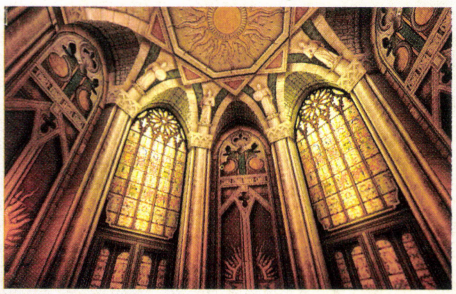
Into the Catacombs



Let the Sun Shine in on Creation



Makes You Want to Pray



UP IN SMOKE Another Dark Sister goes up in flames, thank the light!

While *The Wheel of Time* is based on Robert Jordan's fantasy series of the same name (see sidebar), it doesn't follow the story of any of the books directly, or even put you in the shoes of any of the books' main characters. (It seems, like Lucas and the *Star Wars*

The Wheel of Time's got a great story and tons of action.

games, Jordan doesn't want you to kill off any of his protagonists.) You play the role of Elayna Sedai, Keeper of the Chronicles of the White Tower, as she embarks on a desperate journey to keep The Dark One from ravaging the world. To do so, Elayna must travel far to recover a stolen artifact. Elayna is an Aes Sedai—a woman able to channel the One Power (think of this as The Force, but only women can channel it safely).

Your enemies will include many from the books—Trollocs, Myddraal, Whitecloaks, The Chosen, and the Black Ajah. The latter is a secret sect of powerful Aes Sedai, who are aligned with The Dark One, and they are bitter, bitter enemies indeed. You'll also explore some of the most famous—and fearsome—of Jordan's locales, including Shadar Logoth and The Ways. These places are recreated in a manner that seems very true to Jordan's descriptions of them, and as a reader it's a thrill to explore them. However, you don't have to be a reader to find them entertaining.



SPINNING IN PLACE This Trolloc's gonna throw up soon. Maybe we can borrow a janitor or two from *SimThemePark*.



HOW SHOCKING The last face I see before I die... online.

Unable to channel the One Power directly, Elayna must rely on Ter'angreal—magical artifacts that allow the bearer to channel more of the One Power—to weave her spells of destruction. And there are more than 40 such spells to master, all of them taken directly from the pages of Jordan's books. In fact, when you find a spell and research it, the

FIRE DOWN BELOW Okay, who brought the marshmallows? Hot dogs?

description includes a quoted passage from an instance in the books where the spell was used. Taken together, these spells amount to what is perhaps the most impressive array of destructive special effects ever put into a single game—dwarfing even the efforts of games such as *Heretic II* and *Jedi Knight*. If spellcasting's your thing, you're in for a treat of epic proportions. Not only will you need to use the One Power for defense, but you'll also need it to solve many of the game's clever puzzles. For instance, one level has no tangible enemies other than hidden traps, which require judicious use of the Detect Trap Ter'angreal to avoid.

Jordan aside, *The Wheel of Time* features one of the most well-rounded single-player experiences in some time, offering something for just about every action fan.



SWEET REVENGE I rise from the ashes to kill again, courtesy of the ol' respawn.

And just about everything—from the spell effects to the levels themselves—look absolutely stunning, thanks to a beefed up version of the *Unreal* engine, which includes a few Legend-brewed tricks. The foremost of these is a new particle system that translates into more impressive explosions and smoke effects, such as fireballs that leave smoking craters in the ground. Legend also added support for in-game weather effects such as rain and wind, upping the immersion factor in the process.

Technicalities aside, the attention to detail in the game is amazing.



CROUCH DAMMIT! For some reason there's no ability to crouch. Woulda been useful.

Schools of fish dart about ponds. Birds flit about the trees. Leaves rustle and fall softly from branches. Trails of smoke ascend from torches flickering on the walls. Flames crackle and dance in fireplaces. And swarms of flies buzz around corpses and, yes, even outhouses.

The sound is almost as detailed—if you have a beefy enough system to hear it, that is (at least a



UM...DO I KNOW YOU? Cause you're gonna get slapped down if you stay up in my face like that. Uh...what happened to your pupils?

PII/300MHz and 96MB of RAM is recommended to play both music and high-quality sound effects). Support for 3D positional sound means you'll hear the footsteps of Trollocs as they come up behind you. As you explore the dark catacombs of the levels, you'll hear water dripping, wind whistling through cracks, and rats—at least what you hope are rats—as they scurry away from you. The game's hybrid soundtrack of Celtic rock music aptly fits the mood of the game as well. However, I enjoyed playing the game with the music off, and not only for the performance benefits. I found the game's level of immersion and suspense was enhanced dramatically by simply listening to the myriad in-game ambient sounds.

Think of *The Wheel of Time* as a medieval *Star Wars* with all the trimmings the *Unreal* engine brings to the table, and you won't be far off.

It may sound like it so far, but *The Wheel of Time* does not smell like a rose from petal to stem. In fact, it reeks decidedly of the polar opposite in places. For starters, there's more than a few bugs—so much, in fact, bundling the game with a can of Raid would be quite apropos, not to mention humorous.

Two patches were available at press time, with more reportedly on the way. Expect more than a few unexplained crashes until they arrive. These bugs became more frequent as I delved deeper into the game, hinting strongly at a rushed finished. In fact, in one of the later levels, I fell not once, but twice, through actual holes in the game map.

And while the levels and spells look gorgeous, the character models aren't as impressive. They're not as smoothly animated as those in *Unreal*, and they're a bit blocky in appearance. The cinematics are also a bit technically dated, but they do serve to relay the game's rich backstory well.

There's also the disappointment that not only do you not get to play as any of the main characters



MIRROR, MIRROR Who's the most evil of them all? This damn thing must be broken or something. Everyone knows that Gary Coleman is the most evil of them all. I mean, he *was* on *Diff'rent Strokes*, right?

THE COOLEST SPELL EVER

Terrible Ter'angreal

And We Mean That in a Good Way, Really.

When Rand weaves Balefire in Jordan's books, the guilt he feels is akin to him causing a nuclear holocaust. There's a reason. Balefire not only kills someone, it wipes them totally out of existence. We think that's cool, and we would wish it on our worst enemies. Here's what Balefire—one of 40 spells—looks like in the game.



TROLLOC BY MOONLIGHT Ahh, what fun it is to wander the night frying Trollocs.



SEE YA As he is engulfed in the spell's blast, the Trolloc screams in pain.



WOULDN'T WANT TO BE YA Trolloc all gone. Bye bye, nice Trolloc.

Test Center — The Wheel of Time

UP AND RUNNING

INSTALLATION

+ Auto-configuration works well
+ Supports Glide and D3D cards
+ Seamlessly detects hardware
- Large hard-drive footprint

ACCESSIBILITY

+ Familiar FPS controls
+ Excellent gameplay tutorial
- Ter'angreal tough to juggle
- Missions are tough to navigate in places

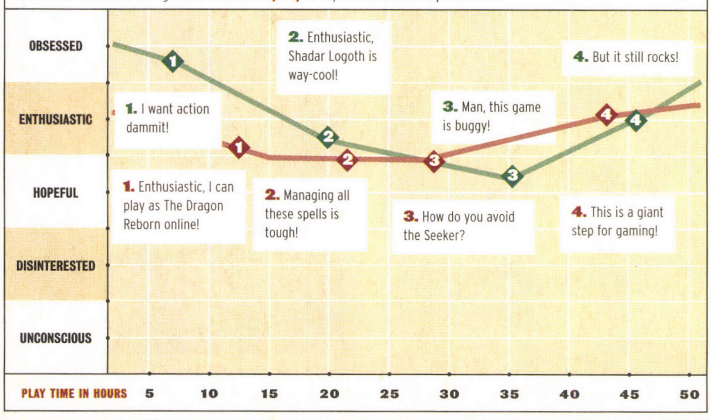
GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART

		Pentium 166		Pentium II 233		Pentium II 350		Pentium II 450		AMD Athlon 700	
PROCESSOR ▶											
SYSTEM RAM ▶		32	64	32	64	32	64	32	64	32	64
Voodoo Diamond Monster 3D	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Voodoo2 Diamond Monster 3D II	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Voodoo3 3dfx Voodoo 3 3000	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
RAGE 128 All-in-Wonder 128	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Matrox G400 Millennium G400	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
TNT 2 Creative 3D Blaster TNT2 Ultra	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
S4 Savage Diamond Stealth III S540	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Software	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										

WHAT IT MEANS — Forget it! — Runs poorly — Acceptable — With ease

THE INTEREST CHART

Wheel of Time's **single-player** mix of story, graphics, action, and strategy make it a breath of fresh air in the FPS genre. Its **multiplayer** options are deep as well.





TROLLOC BY MOONLIGHT Ahh, what fun it is to wander the night frying Trollocs for dinner.

Citadel games are like Capture The Flag but a bit more sophisticated. Instead of flags, you hunt for your opponent's seals.

from the book, you'll not cross any of their paths in the game either—there's no mention of The Dragon Reborn or the Ta'veren at all. However, people who haven't read the books won't give a hoot.Most perplexing, however, is the inability to crouch! This is a gameplay staple in the genre. Why it's omitted here is a mystery—perhaps Aes Sedai are too proud to duck under fireballs heading at their face? We're hoping this will be addressed in a future patch, but that may be unlikely.

Thankfully, *The Wheel of Time*'s multiplayer offerings go a long way towards assuaging most of these misgivings. You get not one, but two multiplayer games—Arena and Citadel. Arena is straight old-fashioned deathmatch, however the emphasis on spell-casting over melee fighting make it a deathmatch experience like none other. You race around levels hunting for the most-powerful Ter'angreal while trying to stay alive. And typically, for each Ter'angreal there's one that counters it. Someone cast a Seeker missile at you? Better run away and find that Reflect Ter'angreal and send it right back at 'em.



YIKES The Myddrall are as scary here as they are in the books!

Don't Think You're Gonna Just Blast Your Way Outta This One

Riddle Me This

This is one "shooter" that makes you think. *The Wheel of Time* is full of puzzles that force you to use Ter'angreal to solve them.

Can't...Get...Through



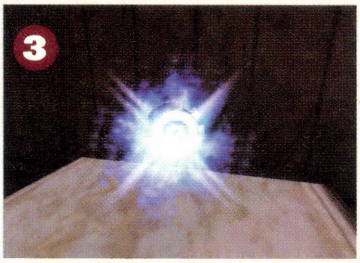
We have to get through a blocked door. I hear a Trolloc on the other side.

I've Got an Idea



Hey, look at that, there's a Swap Places Ter'angreal nearby.

Eureka!

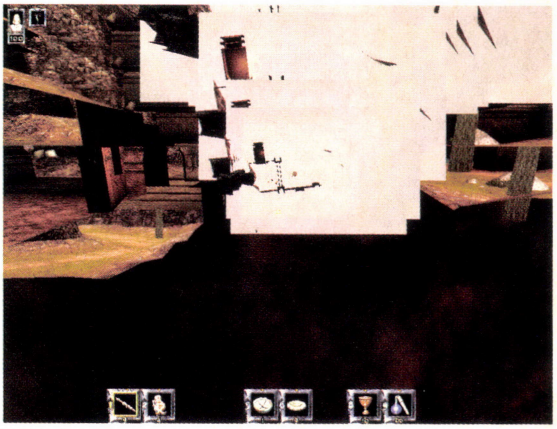


And a Find Target Ter'angreal! It looks like this is my lucky day.

Open Sesame



I cast Find Target through the crack, hit the Trolloc, evoke Swap Places, and presto!



WHOOPS This is what it looks like when you fall through an hole in a game map—this game was shipped a bit early.

Citadel games are like Capture The Flag but a bit more sophisticated. Instead of flags, you hunt for your opponent's seals. And before the game starts you choose which traps you want to guard your seals with and where you want to place them—you can even hide the seals. You can play both multiplayer games as one of four different characters as well: Aes Sedai, Whitecloack, Forsaken, and Hound. Each has its own set of specific taunts to use during play.

Best of all, *The Wheel of Time*'s engine includes the improved multiplayer code from *Unreal Tournament*—online *Unreal* vets will notice this immediately. I was able to find many playable games involving up to 8 players over a 48.8Kbps modem connection, which was a pipe dream with *Unreal*. The inclusion of a map editor with the game should lead to a long and popular life online for *The Wheel of Time*.

***The Wheel of Time's* engine includes the improved multiplayer code from *Unreal Tournament*.**

Unfortunately, *The Wheel of Time*'s single-player blemishes are too many to warrant giving the game our highest score, but it comes close. Think of the game as a medieval *Star Wars* with all the trimmings the *Unreal* engine brings to the table (and without a character as annoying as Jar Jar).

That should be enough for action fans to want to give it a look—Robert Jordan is the icing on the action-game cake.



SELF PORTRAIT That's what you look like in the game. Pretty scary, huh?

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

- MINIMUM SPEC: 200MHz & 32MB
- PREFERRED SPEC: 233MHz PII & 64MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: PENTIUM INTEL

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

- Software Rendering ✓
- Direct3D ✓
- 3dfx ✓
- OpenGL ✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

- EAX (SBLive!) ✗
- Aureal 3D ✓

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

- MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT
  Maximum number of players: 16, PC 1, LAN 16, Internet 16
- CD FOR EACH PLAYER? No
- MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION 28.8k

The Verdict

The Wheel of Time

HOW THEY COMPARE

- **Half-Life**
  The most polished example of an FPS with story, and strategy.
- **The Wheel of Time**
  Emphasis on puzzle-solving and spell-casting provides a new experience.
- **Jedi Knight**
  Best example of good use of license in a game, but dated technically.
- **Unreal Tournament**
  If all you care about's deathmatching, then this is your game!
- **Requiem**
  The Wheel of Time with less beef and more religious overtones.

GRAPHICS

■ Even prettier environments than *Unreal Tournament* with an extreme attention to detail.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 4

SOUND

■ Excellent ambient sounds and appropriate soundtrack.

0 1 2 4 5 — 5

MULTIPLAYER

■ Emphasis on stealth and strategic use of Ter'angreal bring a new twist to ol' styles of play.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 4

PROS: Jordan universe is portrayed excellently. Ter'angreal are awesome, and the level architecture is stunning.

CONS: Too many bugs lend an unfinished feel to the game. Levels are much too dark in places.

OVERALL

The best non-add-on, first-person shooter to hit this year. This game's got combat *and* thinking!

4 OUT OF 5

★★★★☆


PREPARE TO ENGAGE...
www.startrek.com
www.activision.com
Paramount
A VIACOM COMPANY
ACTIVISION
PRESTO STUDIOS
TEEN
T
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

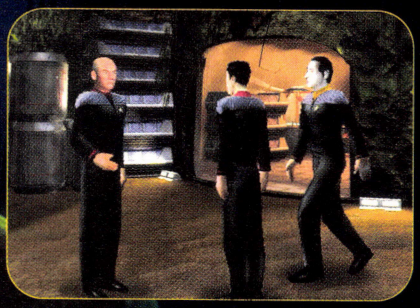
THE HIDDEN EVIL



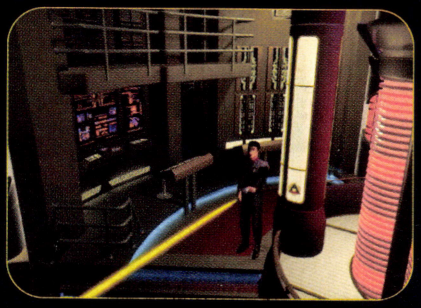
Explore a mysterious, ancient Star Trek civilization, lushly re-created in immense 3-D environments.



Take on foes with deadly weapons, such as phasers and—for the first time ever—the Vulcan Nerve Pinch.



Follow orders from Captain Picard, using your Tricorder and Communicator to gather helpful facts.

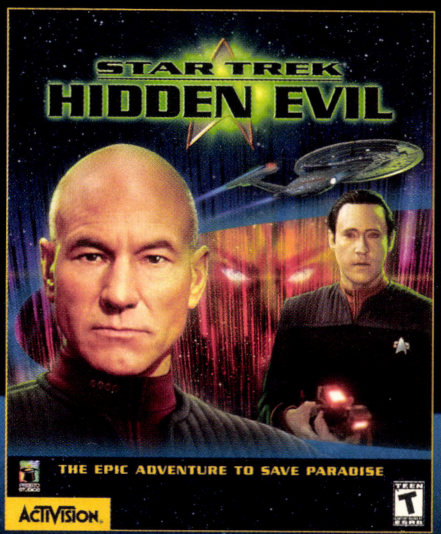


Mission-based action welcomes players of all ability levels in an adventure of stealth and combat.

Picard. Data. The U.S.S. *Enterprise* crew. You joined the Federation to serve with these legends, and suddenly your dream has become a reality. Nine months after *Star Trek*®: *Insurrection*™, you find yourself embroiled in a plot to harness the destructive powers of a coveted genetic seed. You must engage alien forces and outwit your foes in a series of challenging missions... or else the Federation will fall victim to its ruthless archenemy.

THE EPIC ADVENTURE TO SAVE PARADISE

NOW AVAILABLE ON PC CD-ROM



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Add-on of The Year

HALF-LIFE: OPPOSING FORCE Is More of the Same–That's a Very Good Thing

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Sierra Studios** ■ DEVELOPER **Gearbox Software** ■ GENRE **Action** ■ PLAYERS **1-16** ■ ESRB RATING **Mature** ■ PRICE **$30**

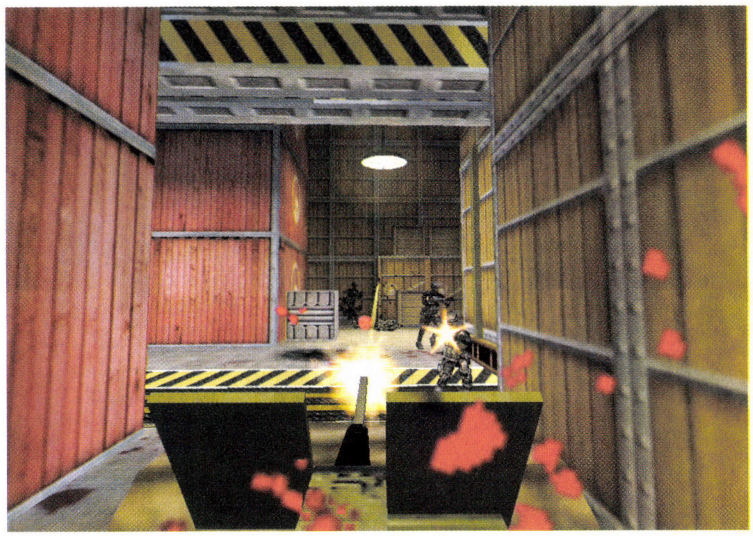
GAME GLANCE

- 13 New Multiplayer Levels
- Countless Goose-bumps
- 1,000 Purple Hearts
- 1 Excellent Ending

incite Golden Award

Talk about pressure. How'd you like to design the first official add-on for just about everyone's Game Of 1998, *Half-Life*? Gearbox Software proved it was more than ready for the task, delivering a mission disc that lives up to the heritage of its predecessor.

By Steve Klett



CANNON FODDER Commandeering any heavy weapons you come across is always advisable. Hey guys! Now smile so I can take your picture. Say cheese!

Ten minutes into *Opposing Force* and I am hopelessly hooked. It's is every bit as captivating, suspenseful, and masterfully entertaining as its parent. *Half-Life* was brilliant for weaving a sci-fi story that pulled players through the game, making it nearly impossible not to continue to the finish. Sure, it also had solid 3D gameplay, clever puzzles, and stellar graphics. But it was the story and use of scripted in-game cinematic sequences using actual game models that transcended its single-player experience to the head of its class.



PAYBACK Time to dish out a little of the Aliens' own medicine.

While its wrappings may be somewhat dated now when compared to the likes of *Unreal Tournament*, *Opposing Force*, fittingly, marks perhaps the best narrative for an add-on product yet–certainly amongst its *Quake* and *Unreal* peers, if not across all genres as well. And, in so doing, it provides a gameplay experience rivaled only by its forbear.

In the original game, you played the role of one Gordon Freeman–a scientist at the Black Mesa Research facility who unwittingly becomes a hero in the midst of an experiment gone decidedly wrong. The fallout from that experiment has Gordon fighting against both alien and government military forces for his very survival. As you'll recall, your fellow scientists first thought the soldiers had come to help save them from the myste-

BOOTCAMP

Combat Training for Dummies

Nothing beats a little preparation. So before jumping into *Opposing Force*, it's a good idea to brush up on the basics...basic training, that is.

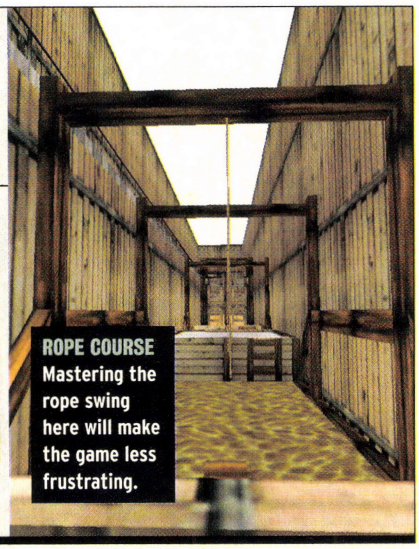
Even *Opposing Force*'s tutorial is awesome, mimicking the hellacious training process seen in movies like *Full Metal Jacket* and *An Officer And A Gentleman*–replete with a screaming-at-the-top-of-his-lungs drill instructor (obviously based on the former film). Even if you're already a Half-Life combat vet it's worth going through for a few laughs. It will also introduce you to the sidekicks you can use in the game, as well as let you practice your rope-swinging skills (very important).



DRILLED Now drop and give me twenty, scum bag!



DOWN AND DIRTY Get your face in the mud for this exercise.



ROPE COURSE Mastering the rope swing here will make the game less frustrating.

rious aliens. However, it quickly became apparent those soldiers where there for cover-up duty and were eliminating scientists and aliens with equal relish.

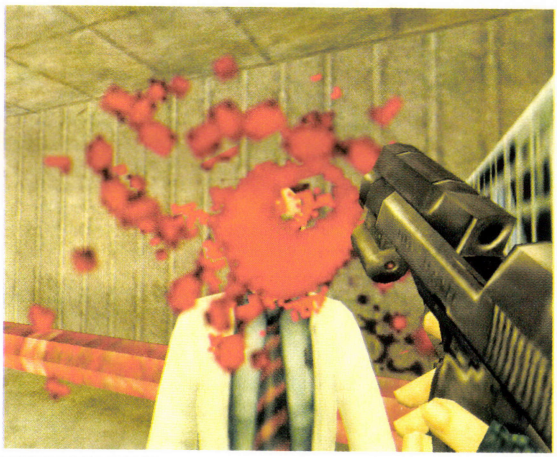
The Other Side of the Coin

Opposing Force puts you in the boots of one of those Marine Corps Special Forces grunts, Adrian Shepard, who is part of a unit tasked with, of all things, finding and eliminating Gordon Freeman—the character you tried so hard to keep alive in *Half-Life*. Of course, during the helicopter ride in to Black Mesa, everything goes haywire and the mission is FUBAR'd before it even begins. Your ride takes a nosedive, and the next thing you know you're waking up on a hospital bed deep within the research complex, weaponless and with all hell breaking loose around you. You've no choice but to find out what's going on so you grab a big wrench laying nearby for defense and start looking for your comrades—and some answers.



TEAMWORK Your grunt sidekicks can be effective with a little patience on your part.

As you attempt to locate Freeman and your comrades, and reach the surface yet again, you'll cross some familiar paths from the first game, eavesdrop on a few familiar conversations, and edge ever closer to your goal of finding your target (no spoilers here, but Gordon's not your father). Many of the alien beasts that will try to rip your limbs from your body—amongst other, more unpleasant things—are the same ones that you fought as Gordon, save for a half-dozen members of a new alien race. The Shook Trooper is the backbone of this crew, and it's a force to be reckoned with. Highly intelligent—read schooled in evasive techniques and deadly accurate with its spore grenades—these bad-boys can take out the most highly trained soldier—read you—in one on one combat.



TAKE THAT ALBERT This time you don't have to be nice to the scientists. And they don't fight back very well either.

***Opposing Force* is every bit as captivating, suspenseful, and masterfully entertaining.**

Of course you'll also pick up some new weapons along the way as well, most of alien origin, including the *Half-Life* equivalent to



GOT GRANADES Remember this cute fella? Be vewy, vewy quiet.

Test Center — Half-Life: Opposing Force

UP AND RUNNING

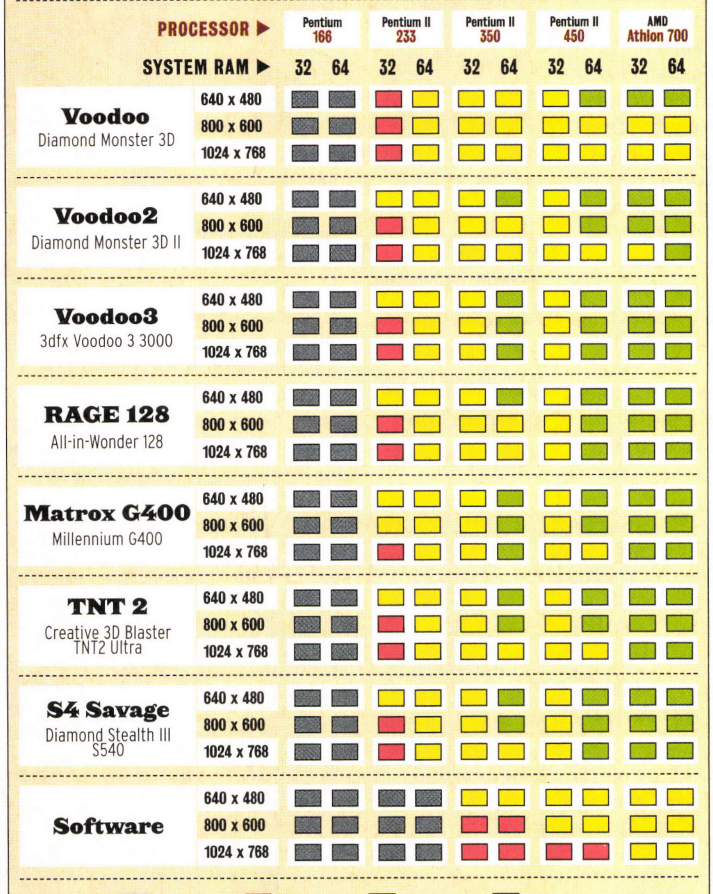
INSTALLATION

+ Installation is fast and simple
+ Seamlessly detects hardware
+ Works well with most gamepads
- Typical installation is around 500MB
- No multitasking: Alt-Tab will crash the game
- ATI cards won't work without new drivers

ACCESSIBILITY

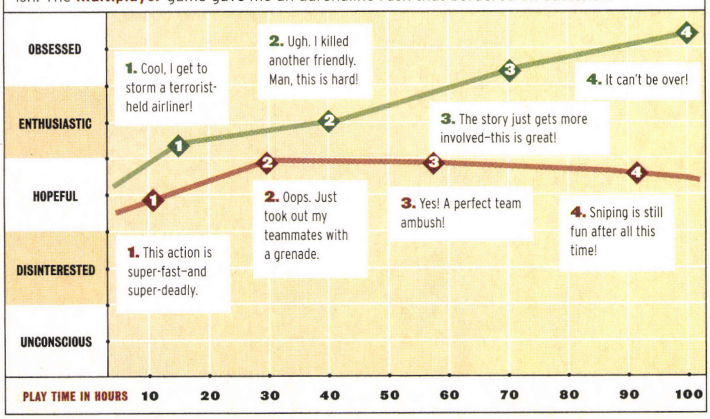
+ The interface is easy to use
+ Thorough tutorial
+ Great team-oriented gameplay
- A bug makes it impossible to change configurations during the game
- Doesn't run well in software

GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART



THE INTEREST CHART

Half-Life's **single-player** mix of action, strategy, and drama kept me intrigued from start to finish. The **multiplayer** game gave me an adrenaline rush that bordered on addiction.



Most "add-on" products extend a given game's story, or provide alternate stories—imagine the bind this puts *Quake* add-ons in.



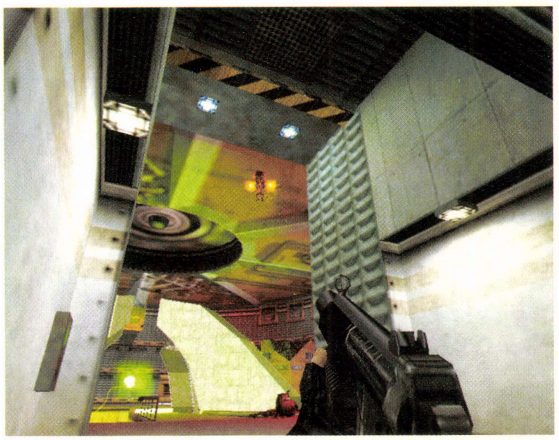
TIME OUT! You'd shoot if you could just find the alien trigger.

Quake's grappling hook, but with a twist–it only attaches to organic material. The scientists derived this one from those Barnacle creatures you'll see on the ceiling all over Black Mesa, and it is very important to master in order to solve many of the myriad puzzles you'll encounter.

Most of the puzzles are navigational in nature, that is you must find out how to manipulate your environment to get past a seemingly impassable obstruction, be it a cave-in, locked door, or walkway. However, there are also a few Boss aliens you'll have to employ the old gray matter to beat–a few of these are *huge*, as in several stories tall (remember the Tentacle beast from *Half-Life*? That was merely a warm-up act). The sheer number of puzzles is a bit frustrating–I would have preferred a higher emphasis on combat, given my new-found Special Forces training and all, and less emphasis on pushing crates around–however, overall they're a welcome change to straight action offered by most other shooters.

Go Team

This time you'll have some help



DÉJÀ VU Been here before...is Gordon close by? What if you find Gordon and Gordon is you playing Half-Life.

too—in the form of other surviving soldiers you'll encounter in the game. These include grunts, engineers, and medics. You can tell them to follow you, guard areas, and stay put. And you'll need them to get past certain points in the game—for instance you'll need the engineer to get you through some locked doors. It can be frustrating at times to get these guys to do what you want, but you almost always feel relief when you find them in the game.

And, while you'll cross some paths in Opposing Force that are familiar to you, the majority of what you see are brand-new levels that merely represent a different path through Black Mesa than Gordon choose to take. The level-design is very true to the original, as are the graphics. However, that said, the *Quake II* engine has clearly been eclipsed of late by the likes of *Quake III: Arena* and *Unreal Tournament*. *Opposing Force* still looks good, but it's getting outdated fast.

And that's okay because *Opposing Force's* allure is its excellent narrative. Most "add-on" products extend a given game's story, or provide alternate stories—imagine the bind this puts *Quake* add-ons in.



FRESH MEAT This is just one of the new aliens to discover—and eliminate.



XEN AGAIN You didn't think you'd spend the whole game on Earth, did you? This sure is a prime location for a jumping puzzle, isn't it? Better be careful. It's a long way to the bottom.

***Opposing Force* puts you right back in the middle of *Half-Life*'s story, simply from a different perspective, which works brilliantly.**

Opposing Force puts you right back in the middle of Half-Life's story, simply from a different perspective, which works brilliantly. It lives up to the lofty bar set by Half-Life, and that's no small task. It is a bit on the short side—I finished it in about 10 hours on medium, and that's including time spent exploring non-critical areas and doing work stuff, like taking all these screen shots—but that's to be expected for an add-on.

The only real nit to pick is there aren't nearly as much in-game scripted sequences as in *Half-Life*. In that game every time you turned around you saw some bloody scientist getting yanked into an air duct or dying some other nasty death. This time, most of the bodies you see are already long dead, and the scripted sequences too few and far between.

For multiplayer you get 13 new deathmatch levels, most designed by an "all-star" team of map design gurus. Together with the new weapons, *Opposing Force* will breathe some fresh air into the *Half-Life* wars being raged online.

Still, the multiplayer additions are but the icing on what is already a delicious cake. The additional narrative and suspenseful gameplay provided in the single-player game are well-worth *Opposing Force's* price of admission. And the best part is it leaves the door wide open for a sequel.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

MINIMUM SPEC	133MHz & 24MB
PREFERRED SPEC	166MHz & 32MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

Software Rendering	✓
Direct3D	✓
3dfx	✗
OpenGL	✓

AUDIO SUPPORT

EAX (SBLive!)	✓
Aureal 3D	✓

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT	
Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 16, Internet 16	
CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	Yes
MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	28.8k

The Verdict — Half-Life: Opposing Force

HOW THEY COMPARE

Half-life
Proved what good story-telling could do for a genre lacking in personality.

HL: Opposing Force
Just as good as *Half-Life*, but quite a bit shorter.

Jedi Knight
An older title with a strong narrative backed by a stronger license.

Rogue Spear
Realistic gameplay backed by wordsmith Tom Clancy.

Unreal
Gorgeous graphics and an attempt at a decent story. Still a good game.

GRAPHICS

Just as gorgeous as *Half-Life*, with both OpenGL and D3D support. You're 3D card will love you for playing it.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 4

SOUND

Excellent ambient sounds, battle effects, dramatic music. Don't expect to go to bed without it ringing in you ears.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 5

MULTIPLAYER

Great new maps, but not enough new weapons. With Unreal Tournament out, you might not find time for it.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 4

PROS: Continues *Half-Life*'s extremely high level of suspense and excellent story; A quality game all around.

CONS: Sniper rifle too powerful; Not enough new weapons; Some bugs.

OVERALL

Continues *Half-Life*'s reign as the top single-player, first-person shooter experience available.

5 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

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ep

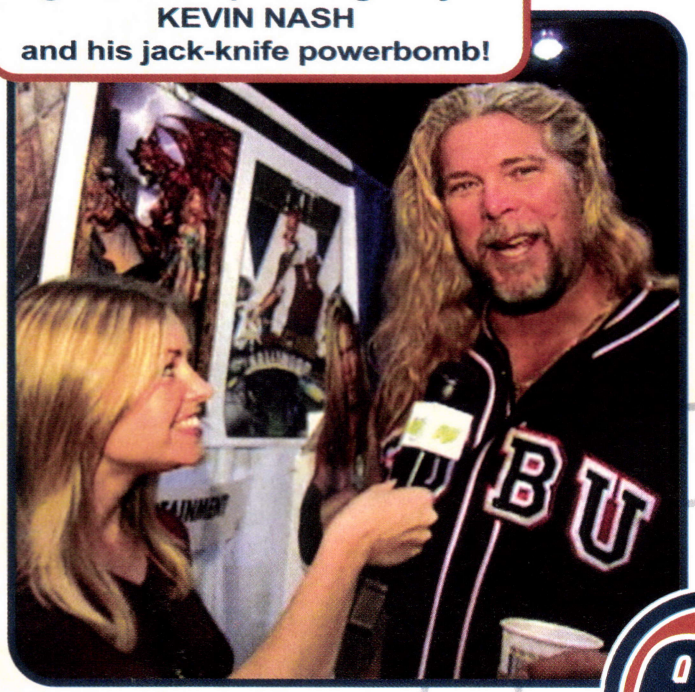
the electric playground

total media coverage of the videogame industry

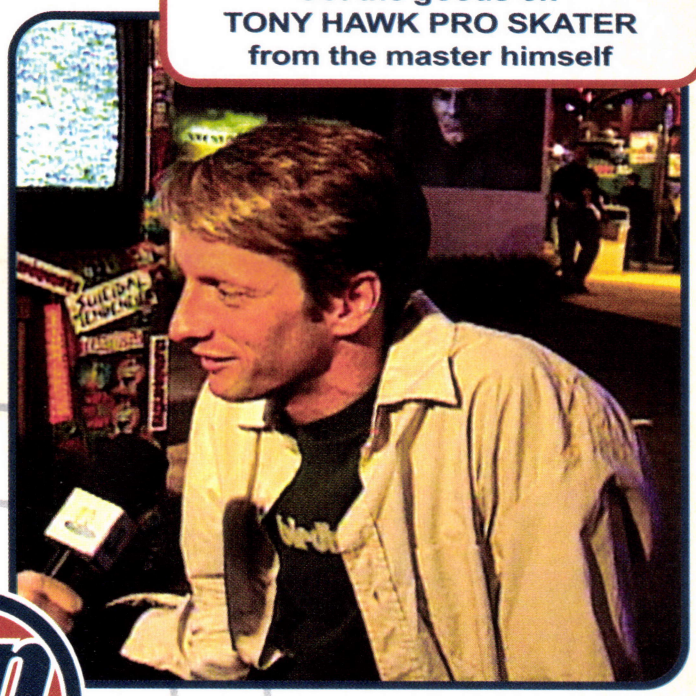
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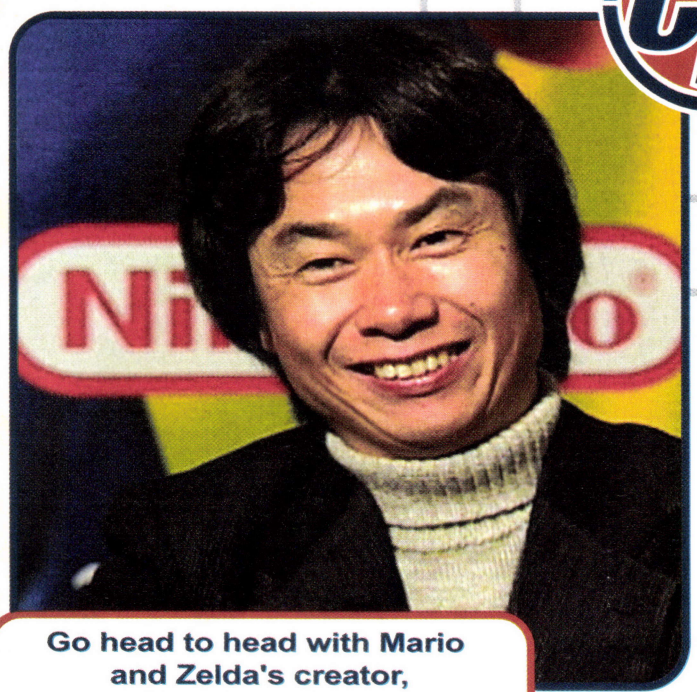
get the scoop on "Big Sexy"
KEVIN NASH
and his jack-knife powerbomb!



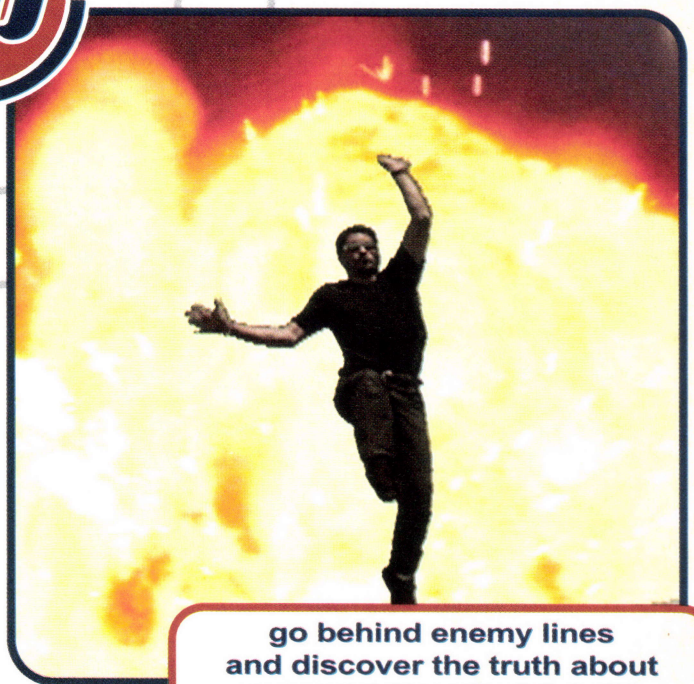
Get the goods on
TONY HAWK PRO SKATER
from the master himself



ep



Go head to head with Mario
and Zelda's creator,
SHIGERU MIYAMOTO



go behind enemy lines
and discover the truth about
TOMORROW NEVER DIES

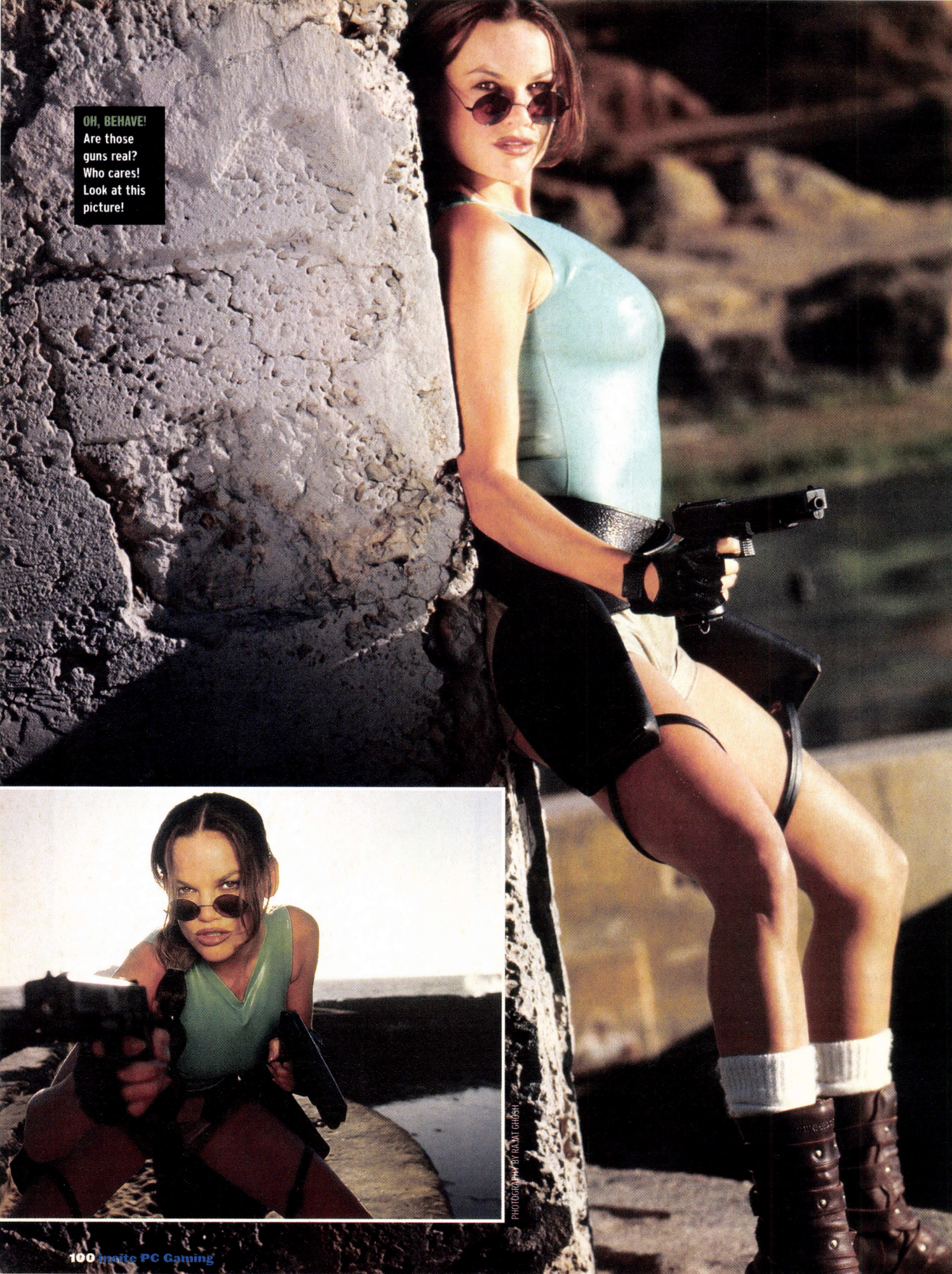
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OH, BEHAVE!
Are those guns real? Who cares! Look at this picture!
PHOTOGRAPHY BY RAJAT GHOSH

Last Action Heroine

Lara Looks Great in **TOMB RAIDER: THE LAST REVELATION**, Too Bad the Game Isn't In The Same Shape

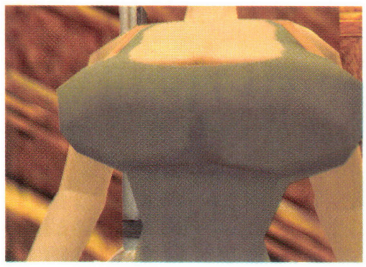
FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Eidos** ■ DEVELOPER **Core Design** ■ GENRE **Action/adventure** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING: **Teen** ■ PRICE: **$39**

GAME GLANCE

- 30+ Ropes to limb
- 50+ Crevaces to Jump Across
- 100s of Polygons to Show Off Lara's Curvaceous Form

She's a mere 32 virtual years old, but Lara Croft isn't aging gracefully. This is the most significant revelation in store for you when you play her latest adventure—her fourth, not including gold editions, add-on levels, and erotic fan fiction found on various web sites.

By Gary Eng Walk



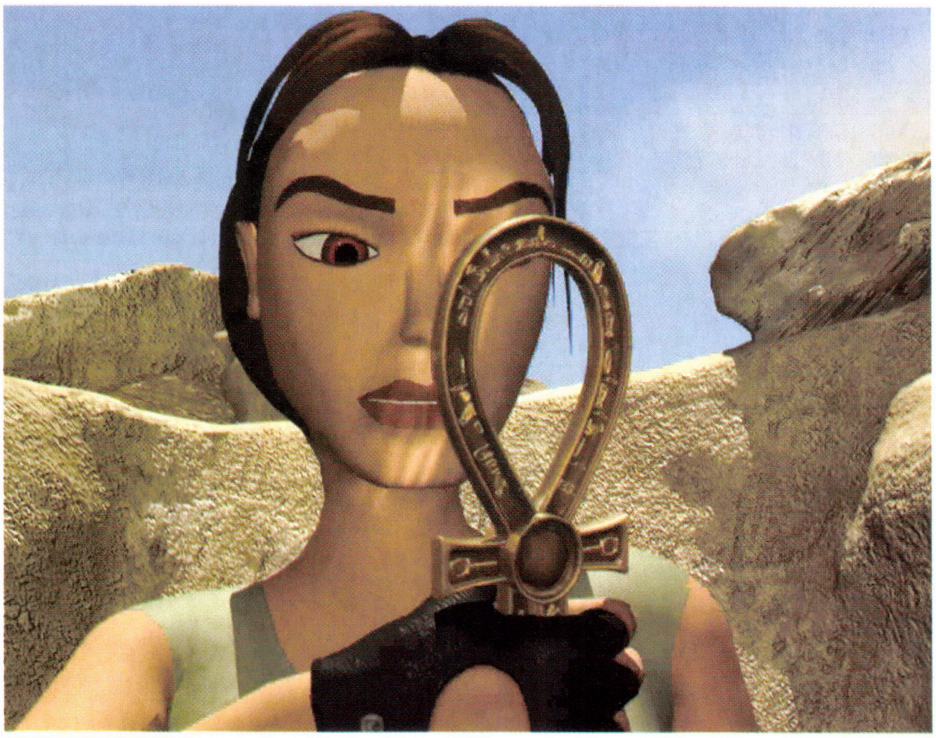
BOSOM BUDDIES You'll often catch Lara in some compromising positions.



ROADKILL The jeep doesn't even need to touch an enemy to run over him.

Lara has added a few tricks to her repertoire: she can sprint like an Olympian gold medallist, swing on ropes, climb poles, read hieroglyphics, and activate switches by shooting at them. She also has new animations: her ponytail bounces around like a snake doing the Macarena, and droplets cascade off of her curvaceous bod every time she rises from a dip in the water, conjuring up images of a *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit calendar. And thanks to a graphics tweak called single-skin technology, her supermodel figure has smoother-looking joints and looks better than ever. But make no mistake: for the most part this is the same exact *Tomb Raider* that we've been seeing since Eidos introduced the series in 1996.

The Egyptian setting of the game is also something you've seen before—the land of the sand was the third leg of Lara's trip in the original. Given the audacious nature of *Tomb Raider*'s previous locales though—the series reached its nadir when she visited Area 51 in *TRIII*—it's a welcome case of déjà vu. For sure, Egypt is the most appropriate place for the discerning tomb raider to be. This time around, the top-heavy heroine's travails are self-inflicted. Early on in the game, you, as Lara, unwittingly unleash the spirit of Set while attaining a priceless Egyptian artifact. After this mishap, she has to figure out a way to recapture the evil god's spirit before he destroys the planet (didn't Brendan Fraser have this same problem in *The Mummy*?)



ANKHS FOR NOTHING Hmm...another priceless treasure. This one says "Made in Taiwan." I guess Lara should just throw this one in the junk pile or try to sell it off to some dumb tourist.

Young Lara

Along the way, you get to meet some new and notable characters. First and foremost, you control a young Lara at the start of the game. Replacing the series' traditional training exercises, the first level flashes back to 1984 Cambodia, where a 16-year-old Lara is learning the ins and outs of tomb raiding from her mentor, Werner Von Croy, a stout archaeologist whose voice is a dead ringer for Mike Myers' Dieter character from Sprockets. Mini-Lara, meanwhile, sounds a lot like a Barbie doll and is even more prissy than her adult counterpart. There's obvious tension between the two as Von Croy instructs "Grave Digger Barbie" on the art of leaping over ravines without breaking a nail. The introductory chapter culminates at the end of the training level when Lara barely escapes a deathtrap, leaving a bitter Von Croy for dead, trapped inside. Unfortunately, he eventually survives and returns to cause trouble for the adult Croft during the rest of the game.

Once again...with feeling

The unconscionable Von Croy is the least of your troubles. Several new

Test Center — Tomb Raider: TLR

UP AND RUNNING

INSTALLATION

+ Installation is fast and simple
+ Supports just about every 3D graphics card
+ Seamlessly detects hardware
- Runs very poorly in software mode

ACCESSIBILITY

+ It's not hard to understand how to play
+ The training sure helps a lot
- You're going to have to push a lot of buttons to pull off some of moves
- It's still a very hard game to get through

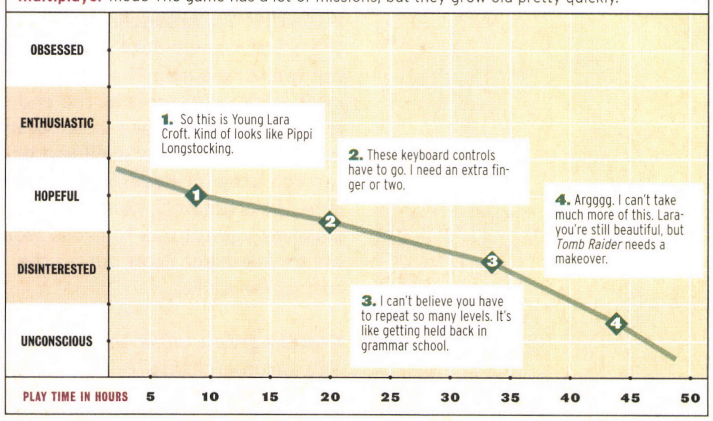
GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART

		Pentium 166		Pentium II 233		Pentium II 350		Pentium II 450		AMD Athlon 700	
PROCESSOR ▶											
SYSTEM RAM ▶		32	64	32	64	32	64	32	64	32	64
Voodoo Diamond Monster 3D	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Voodoo2 Diamond Monster 3D II	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Voodoo3 3dfx Voodoo3 3000	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
RAGE 128 All-in-Wonder 128	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Matrox G400 Millennium G400	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
TNT 2 Creative 3D Blaster TNT2 Ultra	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
S4 Savage Diamond Stealth III S540	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Software	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										

WHAT IT MEANS — Forget it! — Runs poorly — Acceptable — With ease

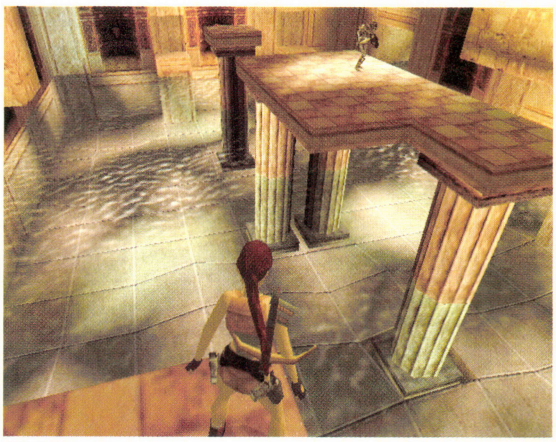
THE INTEREST CHART

Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation is a mediocre **single-player** game and doesn't have a **multiplayer** mode The game has a lot of missions, but they grow old pretty quickly.



features meant to enhance your experience actually make the game worse. For example, the game trumpets the fact that you have to revisit certain levels you've already completed in order to advance to subsequent ones. In reality, this masochistic level design results in some agonizing, hair-graying moments that'll have you reaching for a bottle of Advil. The insipid, roundabout nature of the puzzles in this game (in most cases you run around, kill a bad guy or two, find an artifact, then use it to open a gate or door) already condemns you to an existence of seeing each level's landscapes several times over. Now, with the new required backtracking, you're forced to see them even more (try not to die too often, or you're in for even more repetition). *TLR* would have been best served using *Tomb Raider III*'s non-linear structure, which had multiple paths within each level that led to the end, but didn't require the player to engage in each

This masochistic level design results in some agonizing, hair-greying moments that'll have you reaching for a bottle of Advil.



WATERING HOLE The Presidential Suite at Caesar's Palace in Vegas goes for $100,000 a night, but you get your own indoor pool.



SEE YA DOC Now is Young Lara's chance to get rid of Von Croy once and for all: Shoot him in the back and push him off the edge.

and every one to finish the game.

Bad On The Fingers

Another ill-conceived feature is Lara's rope-swinging ability. With it, she can swing across spans that are too far to jump over. Sounds easy enough, right? Wrong. It turns out you have to be a finger contortionist to make a successful landing on the other side: using the default keyboard layout, you'll need to press the Control key to hang on, the ?-key to keep the rope swinging, and both the Up-arrow and Alt-key to jump off. It isn't much better using a game controller. Other actions that take far too much effort include getting out of the jeep (you have to figure out on your own that the End key, left arrow, and ALT need to be pressed simultaneously) and the mid-air somersault (the game manages to explain how to pull this move off, but it still requires pressing down three keys). 90 percent of the times you die are not the result of your lack of skill but the result of abominable, clumsy controls.

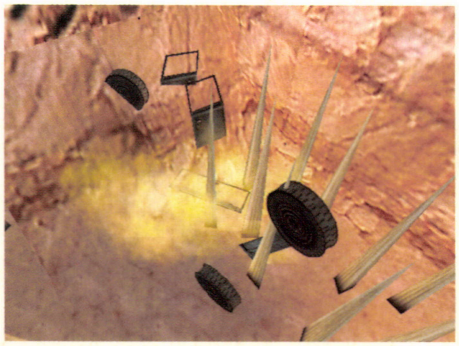
Adding to the confusion are the perplexing choices of camera angles. Programmers seem to have tinkered with this part and made it convincingly worse. Midway through running down a hallway, for example, the third-person perspective changes from a back-facing angle of Lara to a front-facing one, thus throwing off the player's orientation. At other times, the camera zooms in far too close on her body—good for drooling Lara fans, bad for players trying to control her.

Fans won't mind

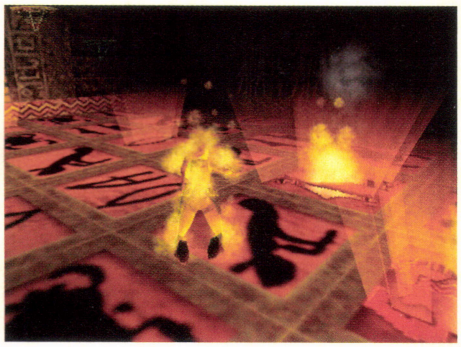
Unquestionably, *Tomb Raider*'s devoted fans will accept this latest effort with open wallets. And why not? *The Last Revelation* still provides the same kind of experience as all of the other *Tomb Raider* games. As the screenshots will attest, the graphics look much better, but there really hasn't been much evolution in the gameplay and the way Lara moves about the screen.

Core and Eidos need to find some truly innovative ways to improve the gameplay and bring Lara into the next century. If you're a long-time *Tomb Raider* devotee, and you've upgraded your computer since *Tomb Raider III*, you should be quite pleased with it. As for us, we hope that *The Last Revelation* means that the mold will finally be broken and that the next time we see Lara Croft, she'll be in a different kind of game.

THE MANY DEATHS OF LARA



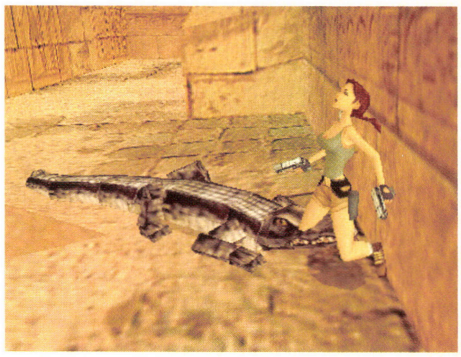
YOU'LL POKE YOUR EYE OUT Lara impales herself on one of the more nasty deathtraps in the game.



BURN BABY, BURN Lara plays with fire and loses. Doesn't she know to stop, drop, and roll?



FALLING FOR YOU The freefall o' doom. If it's deep enough, you get to hear Lara scream.



GATOR MEAT An alligator makes takeout of Lara. Will that be breasts or thigh? What's the better value?

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

MINIMUM SPEC	233MHz & 16MB
PREFERRED SPEC	266MHz & 32MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

Software Rendering (4MB CARD REQ.)	✓
Direct3D	✓
3dfx	✓
OpenGL	✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

EAX (SBLive!)	✓
Aureal 3D	✗

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT	
Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN N/A, Internet N/A	
CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	N/A
MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	N/A

The Verdict — Tomb Raider: TLR

HOW THEY COMPARE

Indiana Jones
Indy moves slower than Lara, but *I.M.* is clearly the superior adventure game.

Tomb Raider: TLR
The *Tomb Raider* franchise is getting crusty, but its still fun nevertheless.

Prince of Persia 3D
Real men wear fedoras, not turbans. Not in the same league as the top two.

Tomb Raider
It also featured an Egyptian adventure. *TLR* is only marginally better.

Tomb Raider III
With so many locations, Lara's third adventure was too much to take.

GRAPHICS
■ Generally impressive, but less polished than other games, such as Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine.

0 1 2 4 5 **3**

SOUND
■ A far-too-sedate soundtrack, and as usual, Lara's orgasmic grunts and sighs steal the show.

0 1 2 4 5 **3**

MULTIPLAYER
■ *Tomb Raider: The Last Revelation* has no multiplayer support.

0 1 2 3 4 5 **X**

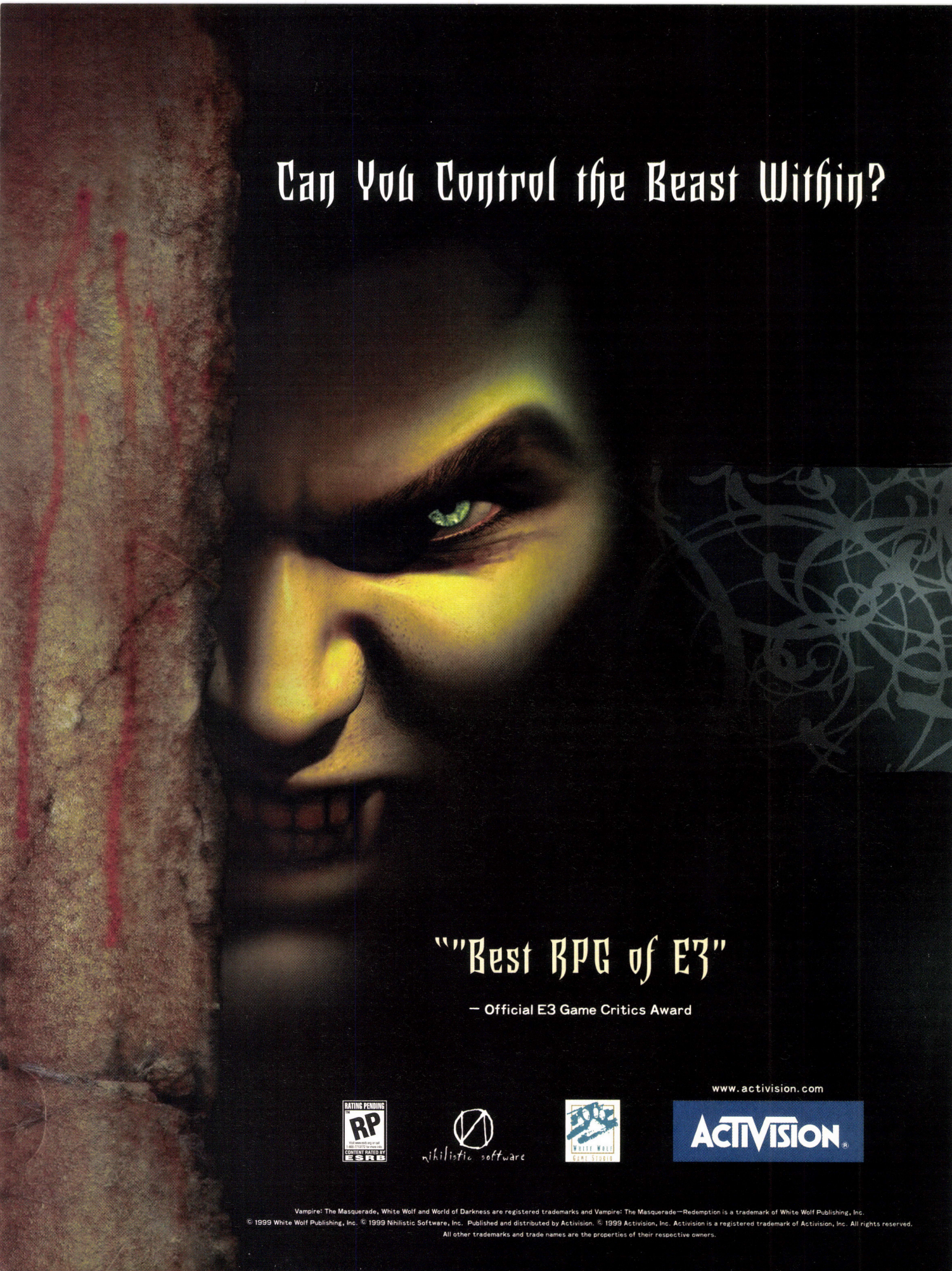
PROS: A decent storyline and the best *Tomb Raider* setting of all–Egypt; The Young Lara level was a creative idea.

CONS: Befuddling level design; Sloppy collision detection; awkward camera angles that will make you dizzy.

OVERALL
Only hardcore *Tomb Raider* fans will want to make it through this hard to play adventure.

3 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆


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— Official E3 Game Critics Award
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REDEMPTION™

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Build your own thrilling online adventure with a unique storytelling system. Choose a clan from the vampiric bloodlines and join in the never-ending war of darkness.





LOOK OUT LARA The *real* tomb raider is out to steal the throne from Ms. Croft.

Man and Machine

INDIANA JONES Goes 3D, but Can He Beat Lara Croft at Her Own Game?

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **LucasArts** ■ DEVELOPER **LucasArts** ■ GENRE **Action/adventure** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$39.00**

GAME GLANCE

- 1 Long Bullwhip
- 100+ Commies
- 17 Game Levels
- 1 Very Famous Professor/Adventurer

It took a score of inspirational *Tomb Raider* games and three years of development, but LucasArts has finally succeeded in giving Indiana Jones his first real-time, 3D adventure.

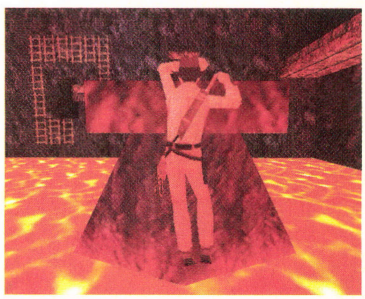
By Gary Eng Walk

In the first chapter of *Indiana Jones and The Infernal Machine*, our action hero finds himself in a rocky, desolate Utah canyon and discovers his worst nightmare.

No, it's not a cavern full of snakes, it's that there are no magical chalices in sight, no villains to fight, not even a lethal death trap to evade. What's an adventurous archeologist to do?

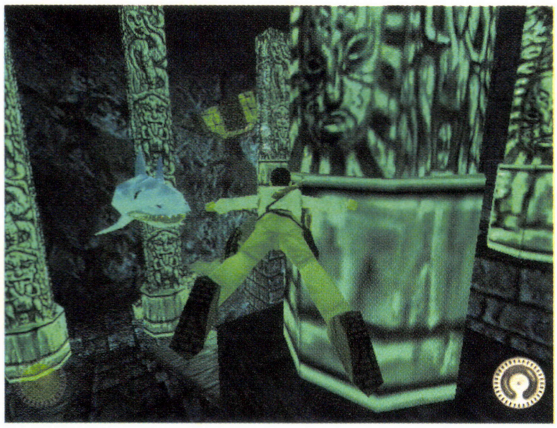


OVER THE EDGE Indy regrets his decision to buy the raft instead of the barrel.



BURNING DESIRE In the volcano level, it's not the humidity, it's the heat.

At first glance, *Infernal Machine* seems like a bold *Tomb Raider* rip-off—which is ironic since everyone accused *Tomb Raider* of being an Indiana Jones rip-off when Lara made her first appearance. Talk about déjà vu: Indy walks, runs, grapples, climbs, shimmies, crawls, and auto-aims his guns exactly like Lara Croft. You almost expect to see Indy sporting tight shorts and a tank-top. Ugh. On second thought....



WHEN ANIMALS ATTACK Lack of oxygen isn't your only worry when you go adventuring underwater.

But hold on. The canyon level, as it turns out, is just a training session so you can familiarize yourself with the game's controls. And like the unstoppable Dr. Jones, who always eventually finds the prizes he's looking for during his adventures (and then some), you'll also discover treasures in the game—provided you invest enough time and dig deeply. Trust us: by the fourth level you'll be hooked.

Talk about déjà vu: Indy walks, runs, grapples, climbs, shimmies, crawls, auto-aims his guns, and pushes large blocks exactly like Lara Croft.

White Russian

Indiana Jones, with the help of Sophia Hapgood (a carryover from LucasArts' last Indy game, *The Fate of Atlantis),* uncovers a Soviet plan to reassemble a powerful relic called the Infernal Machine. Once built, the device opens a portal to the Aetherium, an alternate dimension that houses a powerful alien named Marduk who wants to invade Earth.

The Commies, led by a Mini-Me-sized physicist named Gennadi Volodnikov, want to harness the power of the Machine for their own plans of world domination. Hence, they too are in hot pursuit of the missing pieces needed to complete the ancient weapon. These parts are scattered all over the world—naturally—so Indy must travel from place to place trying to find them before the Russians do.

All of this globetrotting results in an impressive collection of exotic backdrops (not to mention serious frequent-flier miles for Indy). This visual diversity is one of *Infernal Machine*'s biggest strengths.

There are 17 levels in the game and each one looks distinctive. The action takes place at tropical lagoons, Aztec pyramids, lush valleys, and in the penultimate level, the psychedelic Aetherium.

The game's graphics more than match anything *Tomb Raider* has to offer. Take, for instance, the feathery snowflakes that cascade onto the ground in some levels. It's slightly disappointing, however, that Indy doesn't leave any footprints in the snow as he treks through a wintry tundra.

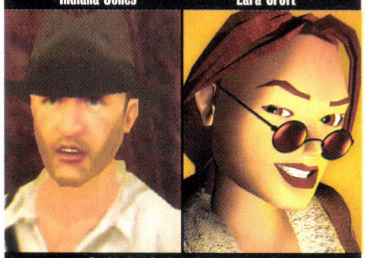


CANDLES IN THE WIND Indy regrettably forgot his photo of Diana.

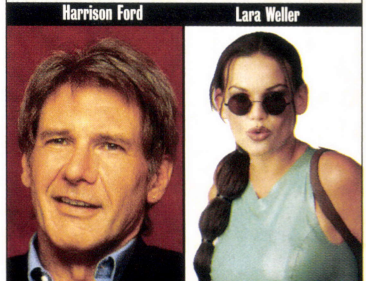
Battle of the Sexies

Indy Vs. Lara

The similarities between Indiana Jones and Lara Croft don't just end with the duo's computer game moves.



Indiana Jones	Lara Croft
Could they be long lost relatives?	
Turns on female students with his revealing lectures	Turns on male gamers with her revealing clothes
Harrison Ford was once voted *People Magazine's* Sexiest Man Alive	Lara has been voted Sexiest Cyber Babe by countless magazines
Young Indy played by River Phoenix and Sean Patrick Flanery	Young Lara could be played by Jennifer Love Hewitt and Katie Holmes
Finds the Ark of the Covenant in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*	Finds the Ark of the Covenant in the first *Tomb Raider*
Gained popularity in film, then made the jump to computer games	Gained popularity in computer games, will make the jump to film soon
Indy's desire for adventure inherited from his archeologist father	Lara's desire for adventure inherited from her archaeology-loving father
Carries a leather satchel	Carries a leather backpack
Turned off by snakes and three-piece suits	Turned off by Corgi dogs and loose clothes



Harrison Ford	Lara Weller
Oh My God! They Must Be Cousins or Something!	

Test Center — Indiana Jones

UP AND RUNNING

INSTALLATION

+ Installation is fast and simple
+ Supports just about every 3D graphics card
+ Seamlessly detects hardware
+ No glitches to report
- Won't run on low-end systems
- Needs 3D graphics card to run

ACCESSIBILITY

+ Game is easy to get into and play
+ The weapons are easy to figure out
+ Game controls work well
+ Fun for Indy fans of all ages
- Some puzzles unnecessarily difficult
- Too much magic at times

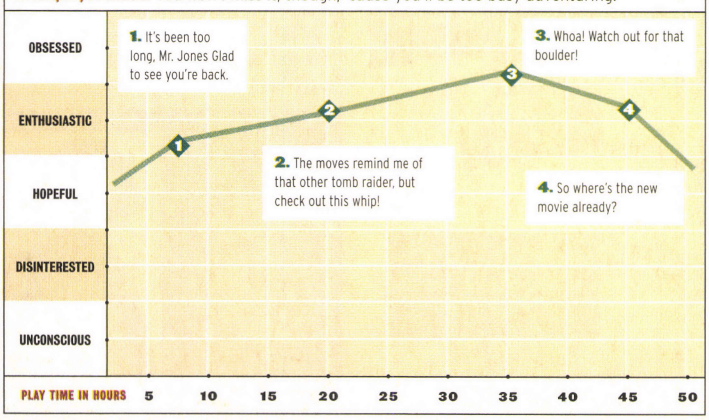
GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART

		Pentium 166		Pentium II 233		Pentium II 350		Pentium II 450		AMD Athlon 700	
PROCESSOR ▶											
SYSTEM RAM ▶		32	64	32	64	32	64	32	64	32	64
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S4 Savage Diamond Stealth III S540	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Software	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										

WHAT IT MEANS — Forget it! · Runs poorly · Acceptable · With ease

THE INTEREST CHART

Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine is a great **single-player** game, but doesn't have a **multiplayer** mode. You won't miss it, though, 'cause you'll be too busy adventuring.



Indy must navigate a labyrinthine series of rivers by busting out his inflatable raft and rowing his way through the raging rapids.



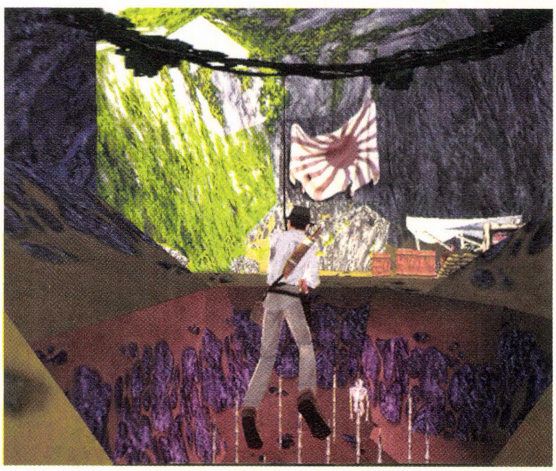
ICE TO SEE YOU No that's not a drumstick—it's part of the Infernal Machine.

But the game isn't just a collection of pretty graphics; it's quite adept at blending sights and sounds to set a mood. For example, in the level that takes place inside a volcano, you'll not only see the smoldering, percolating lava, you'll also hear it seethe and hiss. And lest you forget you're inside an active volcano, the entire screen rumbles every now and then.

Roller Coaster Ride

The levels in which Indy pilots vehicles provide the most exhilarating moments in the game. In the Tian Shan level, Indy must navigate a labyrinthine series of rivers by busting out his inflatable raft and rowing his way through the raging rapids. Gamers also get to experience a jeep chase and a roller coaster mine cart sequence that's reminiscent of the one seen in *Temple of Doom.*

Kudos to LucasArts for giving players the ability to save anytime, anywhere, without limits. These types of games are hard enough without having to worry about how many save-units you have left or where the next save checkpoint is.



SWINGING SUCCESS The trusty whip once again saves Indy from a nasty trap. Everybody knows Indy is a swinger from way back.

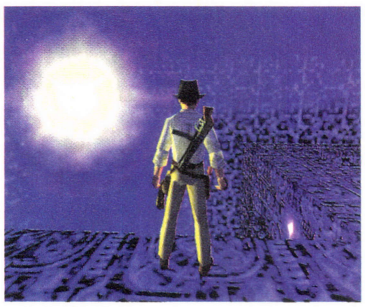
The game's producers also tried to make players' jobs easier by having Indy give some not-so-subtle verbal clues throughout the story. Sometimes this equalizer makes for some blunt, awkward soliloquies: "Look what I found: an arming device for a Japanese torpedo."

The niftiest aid is the chalk feature (see sidebar). If you get lost in a certain tomb, you can use the chalk to mark up the walls in order to leave a breadcrumb trail signaling where you've been.

Infernal Machine's trump card is the fact that it's an Indiana Jones adventure—no other game can say that. There's even a bonus level that features the same tomb in Peru seen in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, giving players the chance to steal the gold idol and evade the instantly recognizable giant rolling boulder.

Despite all of the supernatural elements in the game, you always feel like you're playing an Indy adventure and not just another third-person action/adventure game.

You'll wish that LucasArts took the music a little further, though. The John Williams-composed theme song—arguably one of the catchiest movie anthems of all time—is used too sparingly. The only times when you get to hear even a small snippet is when Indy uses his whip to swing from one side of a chasm to another.



BIG DIMENSIONS Indy gains access to the Aetherium—via an acid flashback.

There's even a bonus level that features the same tomb in Peru seen in *Raiders of the Lost Ark.*

Gimme a Gun

The famous whip is just one of many weapons at your disposal: you can also wield weapons like a machete, a .45 pistol, a rifle, and a bazooka. But the most powerful weapons in the game are the parts of the Infernal Machine. Wield the Urgon's Part, for example, and it will hum like a baritone light saber and shatter a wall of stone. Taklit's Part gives you the power to turn invisible. Supernatural hocus-pocus is nothing new to Indiana Jones franchise—remember the fountain of youth in *The Last Crusade?*—but sometimes these magical elements are a little too unbelievable.

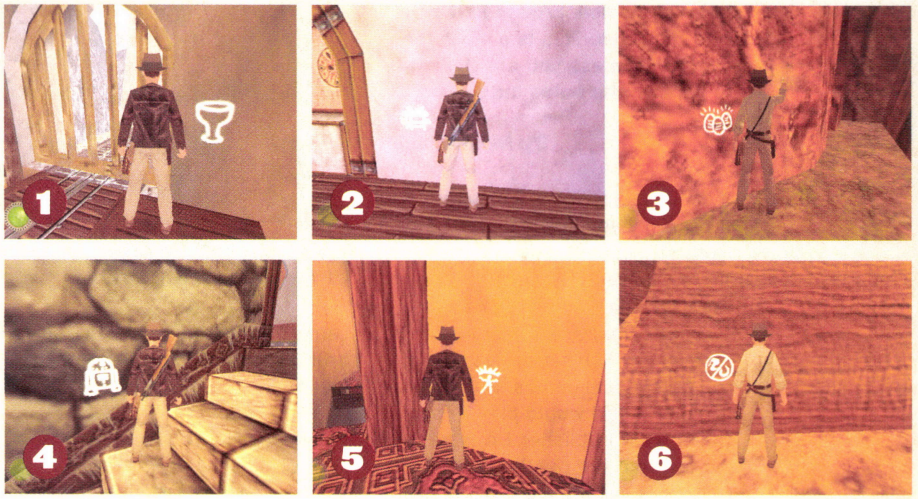
But not even an all-powerful tool like the Infernal Machine can change the past. Six years ago, Eidos beat out LucasArts in making a 3D Indiana Jones-type game.

Indiana Jones and The Infernal Machine isn't original, but it's by no means second-rate. Rather, it's a great adventure that's been a long time coming.

YOU COULDN'T DRAW YOUR WAY OUT OF A PAPER CAVE

Hey Kids! Let's Have Fun With Chalk!

One of the more novel features in *The Infernal Machine* is the chalk tool. You can use it to leave drawings behind that will help you find your way if you get lost. The patterns that Indy sketches are often hilarious references that the keen gamer will easily recognize. See if you can identify them:



ANSWER KEY: 1) Christ's Cup from *Last Crusade* 2) Ark of the Covenant from *Raiders* 3) The Sankara stones from *Temple of Doom* 4) R2-D2 from *Star Wars* 5) The LucasArts logo 6) Snakes—I hate snakes!

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

MINIMUM SPEC	200MHz & 32MB
PREFERRED SPEC	350MHz & 64MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM, AMD K6-2

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

Software Rendering	✗
Direct3D	✓
3dfx	✓
OpenGL	✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

EAX (SBLive!)	✓
Aureal 3D	✓

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT	
Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN N/A, Internet N/A	
CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	N/A
MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	N/A

The Verdict

Indiana Jones

HOW THEY COMPARE

The Infernal Machine
Infernal Machine is the best action/adventure out there right now.

Tomb Raider: TLR
The *Tomb Raider* franchise is getting a little bit crusty, but it's still okay.

Prince of Persia 3D
Real men wear fedoras, not turbans. *PoP* isn't in Indy's league.

Tomb Raider III
Lara's first really good engine made her the world's darling adventurer.

Drakan
You can't find treasure, but you do get to ride a dragon, which is pretty cool.

GRAPHICS
■ Superb visuals; the game is particularly good at rendering water and lava, but there's some mild clipping at times.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 4

SOUND
■ Realistic sound effects: Running on snow sounds different than running on the steel deck of a ship.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 3

MULTIPLAYER
■ *Indiana Jones and the Infernal Machine* does not support multiplayer gaming.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — X

PROS: The game has that undeniable "Indiana Jones" feel; puzzles are just the right difficulty; the game interface is intuitive; stunning graphics.

CONS: Too many supernatural elements in the storyline.

OVERALL

A first-class effort from LucasArts. The level design and puzzles show a lot of forethought.

4 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Your Own Disneyland

You Are the "Imagineer" Who Gets to Create New Playgrounds in **SIM THEME PARK**

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Electronic Arts** ■ DEVELOPER **Bullfrog** ■ GENRE **Strategy** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$39.99**

GAME GLANCE

- 4 Unique Theme Park Worlds
- 26 Rides
- 4 Themes
- 6 Employees
- 12 Roller Coasters to Build and Ride

***SimThemePark* allows you to not only build your dream theme park, but also to walk around in it and ride the rides. This is a blast for everyone unless you are the kind of person who hates cute things.**

By Nikki Douglas

I am a sucker for a *Sim* game. Basically you slap the word *Sim* in front of a game's title, and I am there. I've seen the best of *Sims*, I've seen the worst of *Sims*.

SimThemePark, fortunately, will go down in *Sim* history as one of the better *Sim* games. But even if it didn't, I still would play it—and that's what publisher EA is banking on from the public. That's why Bullfrog's *Theme Park World* became *SimThemePark*. Can you say brand coattail riding? I knew that you could.



MONKEY BUSINESS You and your patrons will have a blast at your park.



PURPLE PEOPLE EATER Happy riders go into the Mumbo, but they don't come out!

If You Build It They Will Hurl

Try not to think of *SimThemePark* as just a theme park building Sim. Think of it as a Little Kid Vomit Inducing Sim. Try as you may, you will never be able to keep the kiddies from upchucking their delicious Sim burgers and Sim fries along every path from out of every roller coaster or ride that uses centrifugal



SKELETOR'S HEAD C'mon, kiddies! Doesn't the giant skull look inviting?


"I LOVE THE SMELL OF MELTED PLASTIC IN THE MORNING."
REAL COMBAT.
PLASTIC MEN™
ARMY MEN™
AIR TACTICS™
BATTLE IN THE AIR, ON THE GROUND AND OVER SEA TO FOIL THE EVIL GENERAL PLASTRO'S PLANS TO TAKE OVER THE WORLD.
★ Pilot 3 classes of helicopters in 20 high-flying missions featuring all new plastic-melting weapons
★ Custom-designed multi-player maps for up to 4 players
★ Put your skills to the test in your search for the way home
EVERYONE
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
PC CD ROM
FAST FREE ONLINE GAMING
HEAT.NET
FREE INTERNET GAME PLAY
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Test Center — SimThemePark

UP AND RUNNING

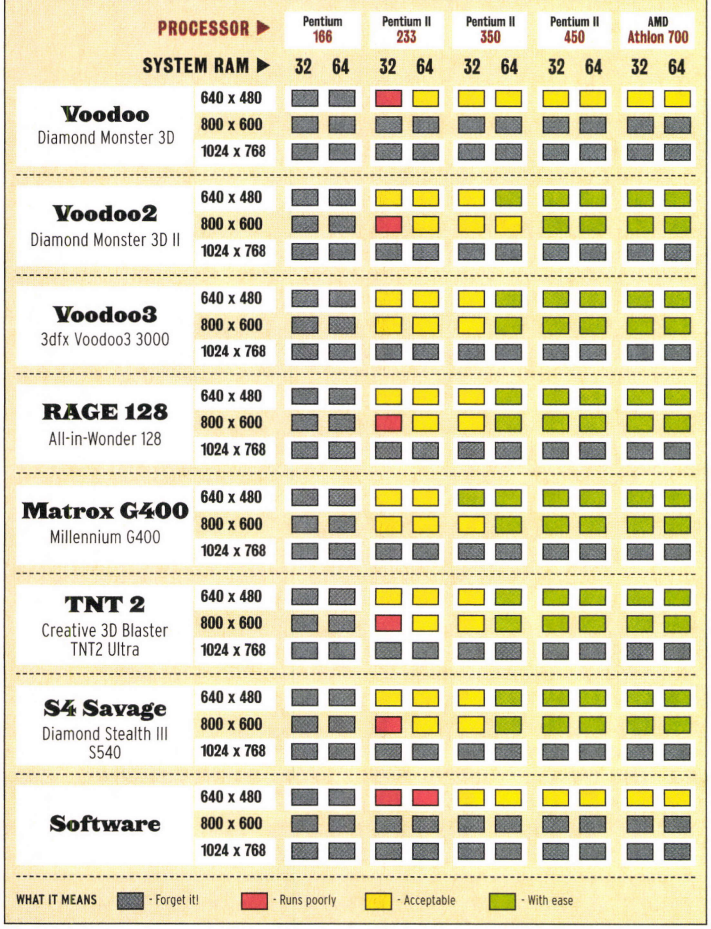
INSTALLATION

+ Installation is fast and simple
+ Supports just about every 3D graphics card
+ Seamlessly detects hardware
+ No install glitches to speak of
- A 3D graphics card is required if you want the game to look good and play smoothly at all

ACCESSIBILITY

+ In-game assistant shows you around the parts of the game
+ Interface is straightforward and easy to learn
- The manual does not go into much depth.
- If you don't have a fast machine you'll have to make a few adjustments to the graphics

GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART



THE INTEREST CHART

SimThemePark is a **single-player** game that will keep you in your chair for hours. There is no **multiplayer** mode, but you can upload your completed park to simthemepark.com.



You may even make yourself queasy—and if you do you'll know you have a winning ride on your hands!

force. Hire as many janitors as you can afford.

And lest you think that all you really have is a Barfarama Theme Park, be prepared to have those janitors work double time cleaning up the bathrooms after these little stinkpots. Once you have mastered puke patrol and clean potty brigade, half of the games challenges are won.

By that token, *SimThemePark* is not an ambitious strategy simulation. However, it will have you transfixed with pretty, animated graphics, unique themes from which to create parks, and the easiest and most satisfying roller coaster editor this old-school tycoon has ever used.

Theme Park Tycoon?

Hasbro's *Roller Coaster Tycoon* is one of the most popular computer games ever, but you have to remember that it is really only ripping off Peter Molyneux's original, Bullfrog's *Theme Park*, which preceded it by several years. Naturally, Bullfrog wanted to reclaim its stature and evolve its game into something that goes beyond the old masterpiece. Their way of upping the ante was to take the game into 3D and make all of the rides accessible in a first-person mode.

Wise move. There is nothing quite as thrilling as building a monster roller coaster, clicking the mouse, getting in, and giving it a whirl. You may even make yourself queasy—and if you do, you'll know you have a winning ride on your hands!

While *Roller Coaster Tycoon* focuses more on the actual building of roller coasters, rather than



GET IN ME BELLY The line is long to climb into the Belly Bounce. Nobody cares that they're climbing into a dragon's butt?



CASHING IN ON THE COUNT Dracula is turned into just another ride at the theme park. Remember when he was scary? Nah. We don't either, come to think of it.

developing an entire theme park, *SimThemePark* has reduced the roller coaster building portion to a very simple point-and-click interface. It takes a long time to master coaster building in *Roller Coaster Tycoon*, whereas in *SimThemePark*, you will be a coaster whiz your first time out. This allows you to spend more time managing your park, watching your developers invent new rides, and actually decorating the landscapes with lovely theme-oriented objects that make the place come to life.

Would Walt Approve?

You'll wish there were more worlds after you successfully build all four of the theme parks in the game. This is a serious hindrance to the game's fun factor, as *SimThemePark* has only about 20 hours worth of gameplay. This leaves you ravenous for more parks to build.

Four unique worlds is two less than the game should really come with, or there should be bonus worlds that you can download from the extremely active Web site or that should become available after you have built everything that comes with the game.

Once you are done building and have researched all the rides and created your park masterpiece, there isn't much to do except keep cleaning up after the kids and repairing broken rides.

Another problem comes in first-person mode when you ride your own rides. You'll notice that you are riding most rides with a bunch of little bodiless heads, which is, in itself, a little spooky. Rather than fully animate the kids on the rides, the designers opted to just put their heads in the rides' seats. Try not to look around at the people you are riding with—it kills any realism the game had so far. Also, many of the characters are blurry once you go to first-person mode, no matter what kind of video card or system you have.

You'll wish there were more worlds after you successfully build all four of the theme parks in the game.

Big System or Death

Don't even try to play this game on a system that is less than a PII/300MHz with 64MB of RAM, even though its default is a PII/200MHz with 32MB of RAM. In fact, to play the game the way it should be played, you'll need at least a PII/400MHz with 128MB of RAM and a 16MB video card. It's a performance pig. But you know how it is: To get the best game, you've got to break a few low-end computer users' hearts.

SimThemePark doesn't recapture the crown of *Theme Park* godliness, but it does make a strong case for simple point-and-click roller-coaster building and shows you the almighty power of the janitor.



PSYCHO CIRCUS We don't know about you, but we would be scared as hell of a park with demonic pumpkins and clowns.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

MINIMUM SPEC	200MHz & 32MB
PREFERRED SPEC	300MHz & 64MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM, AMD K6-2

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

Software Rendering	✓
Direct3D	✓
3dfx	✓
OpenGL	✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

EAX (SBLive!)	✓
Aureal 3D	✓

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT	
Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN N/A, Internet N/A	
CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	N/A
MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	N/A

The Verdict — SimThemePark

HOW THEY COMPARE

Roller Coaster Tycoon
Still numero uno, with great rides and a brilliant roller coaster editor.

SimThemePark
It's got a great sense of humor and uploading your rides onto the Net is fun.

Theme Park
The original park building game, it had great rides and fantastic design.

Railroad Tycoon II
It's not a theme-park building game, but it's a great game in the same vein.

Pizza Tycoon
Its design makes the game a bit difficult for some.

GRAPHICS
Even if you are running it on a super system, the game tends to stutter a lot. Choppy throughout.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 3

SOUND
The music is good, but repetitive. However, the sound effects are first rate. Average overall.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 3

MULTIPLAYER
SimThemePark does not support multiplayer gaming.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — X

PROS: The roller coaster builder is a beautiful thing—you will make the coasters of your dreams from step one.

CONS: It's a system hog, and it still stutters on high-end machines; all the vomiting little kids can get to you.

OVERALL
It's average overall, although *SimThemePark* does have some features to recommend it. It's worth a try.

3 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★



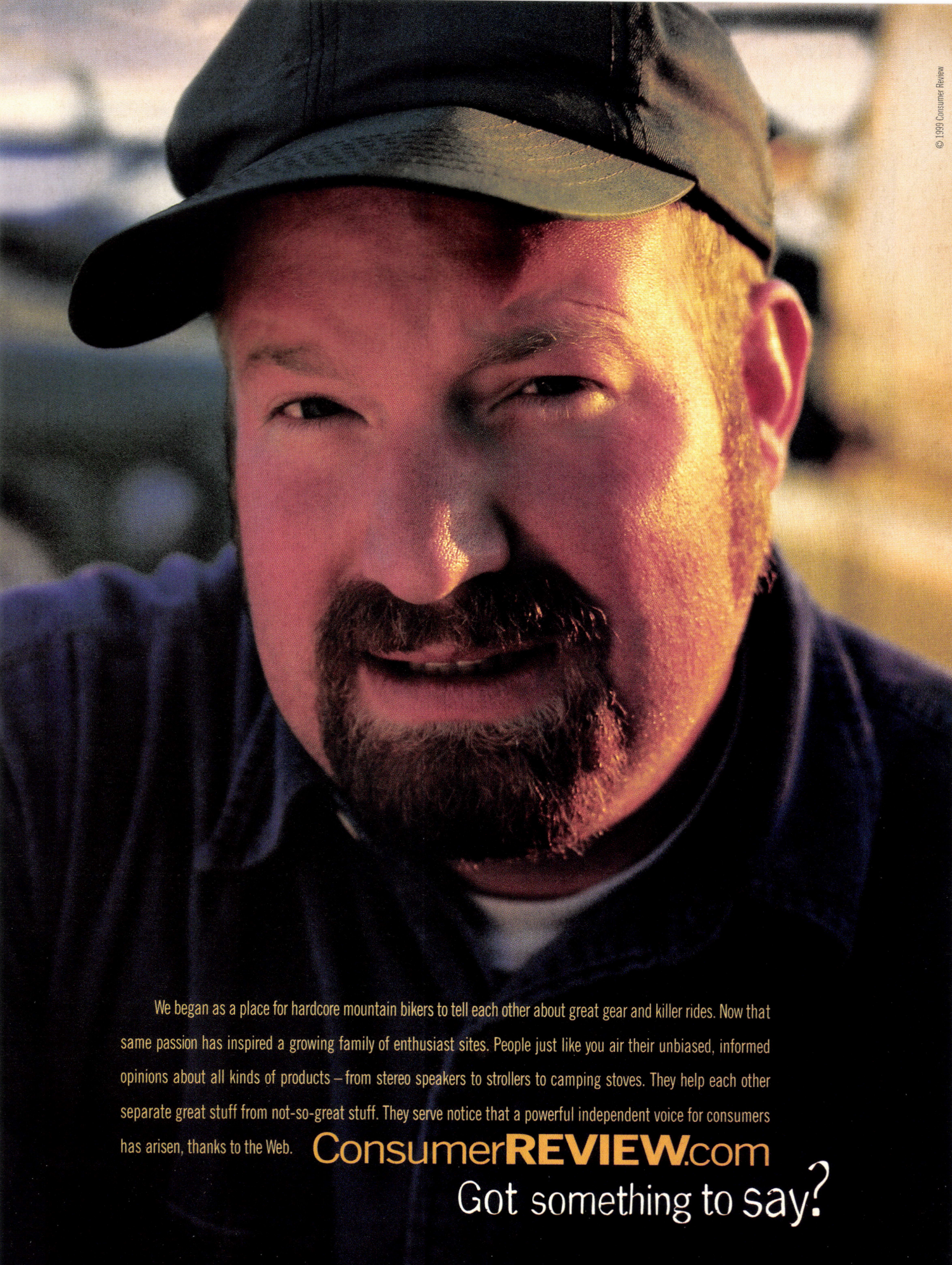
"At 13,000 feet, your stove dies and you're toast.

Check mine out. It's super lightweight. Burns a little hot, but not too bad. It works great melting ice chunks for water at high altitude. I'd say it's just as good as any of the turbo-jetted models, except when it comes to long-term simmering. Here's one trick my buddy showed me.

First, prime the stove and burn it 'til it's hot. Then shut it off and make sure the flame is completely out. Next, remove the fuel bottle, release all the pressure, reconnect the bottle, pump it two or three times and relight.

Big improvement. You can also use the lid from a cookset as a defuser plate. Just put three small balls of foil between the lid and your cooking pot. Overall, it's a good stove.

Still, I wouldn't recommend it for beginners."


© 1999 Consumer Review
We began as a place for hardcore mountain bikers to tell each other about great gear and killer rides. Now that same passion has inspired a growing family of enthusiast sites. People just like you air their unbiased, informed opinions about all kinds of products – from stereo speakers to strollers to camping stoves. They help each other separate great stuff from not-so-great stuff. They serve notice that a powerful independent voice for consumers has arisen, thanks to the Web.
ConsumerREVIEW.com
Got something to say?



Swan Song Let-Down

ULTIMA: ASCENSION Will Be Considered the Series' *Empire Strikes Back*

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Electronic Arts** ■ DEVELOPER **Origin** ■ GENRE **Adventure/RPG** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$49.99**

GAME GLANCE

- 1 Avatar, the Titan of Ether
- 45 Different Spells
- 8 Virtues
- 1 Weird Gypsy Lady
- 1 Fire-breathing Dragon That Toasts Your Ass

***Ultima: Ascension*, the final chapter in the *Ultima* saga, could have been the rare game in the epic that surpassed all those that came before it. Alas, though the story is great, technological glitches prove to be the game's downfall.**

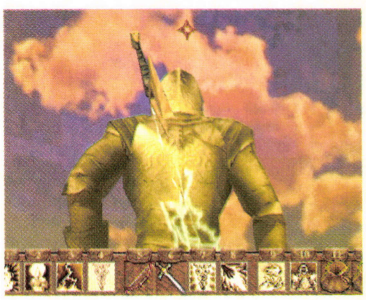
By Nikki Douglas

The Avatar is the perfect embodiment of an archetype: the classic romantic hero. He makes you believe in all that is good and righteous in the world. The Avatar is willing to lay down his life to ensure the survival of the Eight Sacred Virtues (Honesty, Justice, Humility, Sacrifice, Valor, Compassion, Honor, and Spirituality) and the world that manifests them, Britannia. And this drive will possess you as well.

You are the Avatar, but more importantly he is you: you only better, you only smarter, you with a heck of a lot of heart, you a little preachy and self-righteous. But here's the good news: You are a total babe magnet.



WHERE'S THAT CONFOUNDED BRIDGE? Feeling a little blue in Britannia.



LOTS TO CHOOSE FROM Your character has lots of spells and weapons on hand.



$2,000 A MONTH Oh, wait. I forgot this apartment isn't in San Francisco.

Number 9. Number 9.

The ninth chapter in the saga finds the Avatar living in suburban splendor on Earth. 30 years following the close of *Ultima VIII* he is called to defend Britannia from yet another unspeakable evil, this one more horrifying than the previous eight. He rolls out of bed, has a couple of visions, packs a bag, and heads out into the wilderness behind his house. He has to find the gypsy lady who will send him to Britannia.

Once the tarot cards the Avatar has chosen reveal his destiny and the profession he will take on in Britannia (classes range from Paladin to Druid) the gypsy opens a moongate (portal to Britannia) and the adventure begins.

"The Act You've Known for All These Years"

The Avatar's sworn enemy, The Guardian, aka pure evil, is up to his old tricks again. Columns of insidious evil that can tear the world of Britannia asunder at the Guardian's behest have appeared. Your mission is to defeat the Guardian once and for all and restore the Law of Virtues throughout the land.

The Avatar begins to seek the virtues again through quests he completes for the townsfolk. He is asked by Lord British himself to vanquish the ignoble corruption that has choked the life from Britannia. Being the Avatar, he naturally accepts this mission and sets about bringing his form of unprepossessing righteousness back to Britannia.

"But Can He Dance?"

If you are not blown away by the florid and evocative graphics, check for a pulse. *Ultima: Ascension* looks spectacular, though it does get a bit pixellated in some scenes.

For instance, there are times during the game when the Avatar walks to a wall of cliffs and looks into the most perfect burnt orange and magenta sunset. Suddenly the

He is asked by Lord British himself to vanquish the ignoble corruption that has choked the life from Britannia.



YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT THE MIDNIGHT PROWLER "Jim, we can't go on meeting like this, the wife's bound to catch on pretty soon. I can only go out for baked beans and chowder at midnight so many times...."

incite PC Gaming Interview

Seth Speaks!



Seth Mendelsohn is the Lead Designer on *Ultima: Ascension* and has spent the last three years bringing Britannia to life.

How do you approach working on a project that has eight predecessors? How do you make it unique and true to your own vision?

Working on a well known property is always a challenge. You have a careful balance between keeping all of the things that the long-time fans want and pushing the envelope to give the game an identity of its own. I was hired to help make *Ultima* more accessible. Richard Garriott [founder of the *Ultima* series] made sure that I did not stray too far from what made *Ultima* so great, and it was a great balance. I do think that goal was accomplished and that people will enjoy a more accessible and easier *Ultima* game.

What kind of guy do you think the Avatar would be like to hang out with? Would it be boring or a blast?

That depends on where you meet him. On Earth, the Avatar is you or me, a normal person, with a normal life. Once in Britannia, the Avatar becomes the hero you would expect. I'm sure he would let you drive his car and share his wealth with you! As for the chicks, you can bet he's surrounded by all of them!

It's a gorgeous game. How much effort was put into making the game artistic and beautiful?

One of the few positive things about a game that has been in development for so long was the sheer amount of art that was created. The five years of art resources really show. As for the balance of game play, I think we did a great job of having a story that is equally as impressive.

SETH MENDELSOHN continued on page 118 >>

Test Center — Ultima: Ascension

UP AND RUNNING

INSTALLATION

- Installation is not for the uninitiated
- Game may need tweaking to run on some systems, check company's Web site for updates and patches
- Some sound glitches reported
- Graphics glitches common

ACCESSIBILITY

+ The interface is easy to use
+ Thorough tutorial
+ The game is fun for newbies and *Ultima* veterans alike
- May have to reboot during a game to avoid system slowdowns

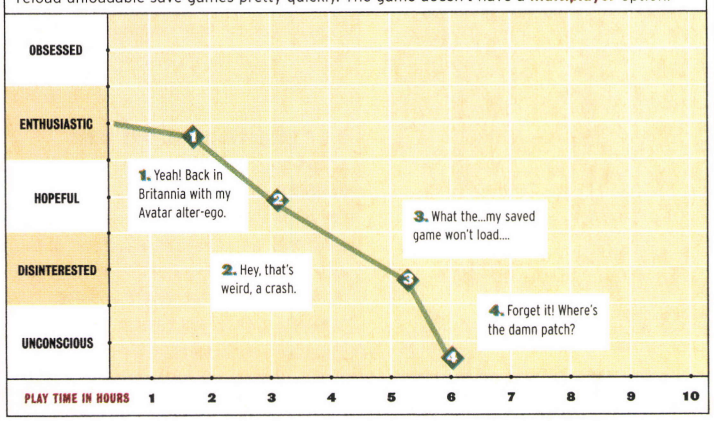
GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART

		Pentium 166		Pentium II 233		Pentium II 350		Pentium II 450		AMD Athlon 700	
PROCESSOR ▶											
SYSTEM RAM ▶		32	64	32	64	32	64	32	64	32	64
Voodoo Diamond Monster 3D	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Voodoo2 Diamond Monster 3D II	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Voodoo3 3dfx Voodoo3 3000	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
RAGE 128 All-in-Wonder 128	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Matrox G400 Millennium G400	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
TNT 2 Creative 3D Blaster TNT2 Ultra	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
S4 Savage Diamond Stealth III S540	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										
Software	640 x 480										
	800 x 600										
	1024 x 768										

WHAT IT MEANS · Forget it! · Runs poorly · Acceptable · With ease

THE INTEREST CHART

Ultima: Ascension's **single-player** storyline is truly epic, unfortunately, I got tired of trying to reload unloadable save games pretty quickly. The game doesn't have a **multiplayer** option.



The game is filled with unfolding stories that link together like tendrils of ivy.

rays of sunshine beating down on him disappear behind a cloud.

The Avatar is above all a living symbol of hope and you will begin to take this position very seriously as you realize how many people are counting on you.

Armies will be raised at your request, and great dragons will be slain in your name. The people who still feel the light of the virtues within them will take up arms beside you and champion your *cause célèbre*.

In one particularly moving scene near the city of Trinsic, you come upon a Paladin and his squire fighting a host of vicious transparent, ghostlike spiders. At this point in the game the Avatar is able to assist the Paladin in defeating the horrid creatures.

Unfortunately, the Paladin receives a mortal wound. He tells the Avatar what he did to regain his honor. The Avatar, though quite stoic, is clearly moved by this. The Paladin's final thoughts are of his wife. He says that he was sorry he could not say goodbye to her. The game is filled with unfolding stories like this, which link together like tendrils of ivy.

That said, there are some gameplay problems to deal with in *Ultima: Ascension*. The ritual magic system, although an interesting idea, can be a bit cumbersome. You must find the correct reagents (spell components), a shrine, a pentagram, and a scroll, and then hope that the entire thing will bind to your spell book when you say, "Allakazam!"

An easier spell creation system (like being able to buy spells from a



HUNKA-HUNKA BURNING AVATAR Hmmm...Now what should I wear? My blue magic slippers with the yellow shield, or...I can't decide.



O MASTER SATAN I don't care what you say, standing in the middle of a giant pentagram—in front of an alter, I might add—means bad news in my book. Maybe they are praying for a patch that will fix the install problems.

Mage in Moonglow) would have been appreciated.

Call the Orkin Man

And now for the bad news. On the technology side of things, this game has some major problems. There are graphics glitches, like close-up pixellation and degraded images of far away objects (the mountains in the distance may be jagged and flicker). While the graphics settings can be tweaked, the game still runs best at a higher than 800x600 resolution and needs a top-of-the-line Voodoo3 video card to handle the workload.

And all that is assuming that you can get the game to run on your machine in the first place. We got it to run on a brand-new PIII/500MHz system with a clean install of Windows 98, 128MB of RAM and a Voodoo3 card. But even then we had some problems with the game crashing.

On anything less than this perfect system, we experienced corrupt saved games, memory leaks that made it necessary to reboot the entire computer every so often, and lots more crashes.

Ultima: Ascension's terrific storyline, graphics, and character interaction would normally warrant at least a four-star rating from *incite PC Gaming*. But with all of the bugs and technical glitches making the game all but unplayable for most users, we can give it only a two.

The ritual magic system, although an interesting idea, can be a bit cumbersome.

» SETH MENDELSOHN continued from page 117

What didn't make it into the game that you wished had?
As a designer I could think of lots of things I'd like to have squeezed in, but if I had to name one thing I'd have to say the Magic Carpet from earlier *Ultimas*.

Why *does* the Avatar go back to Britannia? It seem like he's living *the* life on Earth?
Actually the Avatar's life on Earth is pretty normal and mundane. Going to Britannia allows the Avatar to be a hero and go adventuring.

What's your favorite monster in the game?
The Gargoyle Queen. Her "special" attack will turn a lot of heads!

This is the Avatar's swan song—do you think in the end this will be considered the series' *Empire Strikes Back?*
The game has a lot of moments—happy and sad—but overall I think people will enjoy it.

What game in the last year did you not design but wish you did?
Roller Coaster Tycoon was a blast.

What was your worst moment in developing the game?
Well, I'll never forget in our early beta phase someone off the Web had seen some screenshots and I got this anonymous email that said, "Thanks for ruining *Ultima*. I hope you die."

That's a bit harsh.
Well, you have to realize, that is who has played the game and will be playing it, and you kind of have an obligation to that *Ultima* fan who hopes that you die. You want them to get the game and think, well, okay, you can live.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY
- MINIMUM SPEC 200MHz PII & 64MB
- PREFERRED SPEC 500MHz PIII & 128MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM, AMD K6-2

GRAPHICS SUPPORT
- Software Rendering ✔
- Direct3D ✔
- 3dfx ✔
- OpenGL ✘

AUDIO SUPPORT
- EAX (SBLive!) ✔
- Aureal 3D ✔

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS
- MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT
  Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN N/A, Internet N/A
- CD FOR EACH PLAYER? N/A
- MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION N/A

The Verdict

Ultima: Ascension

HOW THEY COMPARE

- **Asheron's Call**
  This online-only game has similar gameplay to *UA*, but little panache.
- **Ultima VI**
  Until *Ultima: Ascension* beat it out, this was by far the best of the bunch.
- **Ultima VIII**
  This arcade-like entry into the series was not well received by the public.
- **Ultima: Ascension**
  Glitches and bugs spoil one of the most beautiful, interesting *Ultimas* in years.
- **Ultima Online**
  The online-only *Ultima* has a checkered past, but is getting better.

GRAPHICS
■ Breathtaking vistas, realistic day into night, but some minor pixelization problems do occur.

0 1 2 3 5 **4**

SOUND
■ Voice acting is decent, ambient sounds enhance gameplay, the music is quite good in places.

0 1 2 3 4 **5**

MULTIPLAYER
■ *Ultima: Ascension* has no multiplayer support.

0 1 2 3 4 5 **X**

PROS: The storyline is a tribute to the entire series.

CONS: Bugs, bugs, and more bugs ruin an otherwise majestic game; the ritual magic system could be done a little better; save game glitches.

OVERALL

A crowning achievement that could have been, *Ultima: Ascension* falls victim to the hurry-up-and-ship-it blues.

2 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆


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incite

Only Human

Are You Tired of Playing a Pointy-eared Elf or a Stumpy Dwarf? Then Check Out **ASHERON'S CALL**

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Microsoft** ■ DEVELOPER **Turbine Entertainment** ■ GENRE **Online/RPG** ■ PLAYERS **100+** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$50**

GAME GLANCE

- 3 Races
- 500 Custom Facial Expressions
- 100 Spell Combinations
- 200 Different Weapons

***Asheron's Call* is not better than *EverQuest*, but it's much easier to play and may ultimately, given that it's a Microsoft game, be embraced by more people.**

By Nikki Douglas

There's nothing dull about being a human being. After all, we're the dominant species on Earth, we can totally annihilate ourselves, and we have sex just for pleasure (only humans and dolphins do that).

In *Asheron's Call* you get to play as one of three human races—and only human races, which can get pretty dull, just like the rest of the game. And although the rest of Asheron's call has some redeeming qualities, it's no *EverQuest*.

One is the allegiance system, whereby you swear fealty to another more experienced player in exchange for goods like armor and weapons. The vassel also earns a percentage of the experience points from the leader.



MAGICAL MYSTERY TOUR Now those are some pretty potent 'shrooms!



SELF-DEFENSE Forget the pepper spray. This girl is armed with a real mace.

You can change the facial features of your characters right down to their hairstyle and eye color, and dress them up in funky baggy pantaloons of a variety of color choices and styles. Unfortunately, you'll still look basically identical in the game, all homogenized in the perfect eyes, hair, lips, pantaloons Microsoft cosmos.

Next, you choose a character class, such as an Archer, Blademaster, Warrior, Enchanter, Sorcerer, or Life Mage (cleric). You can then assign skills and attributes to your character yourself and risk striking out as a generic adventurer, kind of a jack of all RPG skills but master at none.



BLUE BULLYS Why don't you guys pick on someone your own size?

A Drudge By Any Other Name

EverQuest has rats for newbies to easily kill; *Asheron's Call* has Drudges, lots and lots of drudges. Get used to them because they will be the only prey you can handle for the first 10 levels. And after that, you won't see many more monsters. You will run hither, thither, and yon killing drudges (which are basically Dr. Suess-looking cat creatures), looting them, and running back to town to sell your goodies. It takes a while before you can afford strong armor and solid weapons.

Going Solo

One huge plus is the ability for gamers to play alone. *EverQuest*, in contrast, is a group-oriented game that offers little in the way of a solo gameplay experience. In *Asheron's Call*, although grouping is important, especially in dungeons, a large part of the game takes place while you travel across the countryside, which you usually do alone.

Pretty Pictures

Although *Asheron's Call* lacks the ultra-polished graphics quality of a 3D enhanced game like *EverQuest*, it isn't taxing on your computer, so there's no need to "zone" (loading time in *EverQuest*) as well as no continuous distance redraw rate (where the scenery is drawn only when you approach that

specific direction), so you'll never be surprised by a giant waiting for you by a tree that wasn't there a second ago.

Ambient sound effects are pleasant, real-world counterparts of birds twittering, lightening crashing, rain pouring down on soaked earth, and water rushing up against a sandy shore. This adds a heightened sense of authenticity to the game and can help the gamer get by things like *Asheron's Call*'s awkward character naming convention, where you actually might end up playing with someone who calls themselves Deek the Nipple.

Big Yawn

If you're new to online RPGs, *Asheron's Call* might be a good first choice. There are plenty of weak Drudges to kill—and little else—so it's an easy game to play. But if you really want to experience the excitement that hundreds of thousands of people get from this kind of gaming, you have to try *EverQuest*.

***EverQuest* has rats; *Asheron's Call* has drudges, lots and lots of drudges.**



LET'S SPLIT Don't know which way to go at that fork in road? Let's ask Woodsy Owl. If he can't help, we'll skin 'em.

Battle of the Online RPGs

Which One Should You Choose?

Three massively-multiplayer online RPGs are at the top of the heap, so it might be difficult for you decide which one to spend your money on every month. Here's a quick summary of each one:

EverQuest

What's Good: There's not a damn person who plays this game that hasn't abandoned their loved ones to reach the next level.
What's Bad: You'll probably abandon your loved ones to reach the next level. It's too addcting; you'll have to fight with others to stay alive.
What It Needs: Portals that let you easily travel between the humongous worlds; or at least a horse to help you get there faster; when the journey's over, a nice house of your own to rest in.



THE KING EverQuest is the best online RPG in our book.

Asheron's Call



THE CONTENDER *Asheron's Call* is a promising newcomer.

What's Good: You can play alone without dying a lot; the allegiance system lets new players tag along with someone to learn the ropes.
What's Bad: The characters are a bit blockier looking than in *EQ*; spellcasting is too convoluted; you can only play as a human.
What It Needs: The *EverQuest* servers to blow up. It's hard to believe that *EQ* players will drop their high-level characters and start over. But the way Microsoft does business, you never know.

Ultima Online



FALLING BACK It might be Ultima, but it's not as pretty as the others.

What's Good: A long legacy with a well-developed history; a large population of experienced players; you can buy buildings and horses.
What's Bad: Not only will you have to contend with monsters, you'll also have to fight off those pesky player-killers; outdated 2D graphics.
What It Needs: Tread lightly if you're a new player and try to look like you know what you're doing or you'll be eaten alive by the other murderous players. Damn cannibals!

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY
- MINIMUM SPEC 200MHz & 32MB
- PREFERRED SPEC 400MHz & 64MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM

GRAPHICS SUPPORT
- Software Rendering ✓
- Direct3D ✓
- 3dfx ✗
- OpenGL ✗

AUDIO SUPPORT
- EAX (SBLive!) ✓
- Aureal 3D ✓

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS
- MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT
  Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN N/A, Internet 100
- CD FOR EACH PLAYER? Yes
- MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION 56k

The Verdict — Asheron's Call

HOW THEY COMPARE

- **EverQuest** — It doesn't get better than this; called EverSmack for its addictive nature.
- **Asheron's Call** — A decent entre, but ultimately not the powerhouse it could've been.
- **Ultima Online** — The *Ultima* universe still has a lot of appeal, but its not the leader anymore.
- **Meridian 59** — Pixilated and dated, this game is well past its prime .
- **Gemstone** — It's only a text based online RPG, but a lot of people are still into these games.

GRAPHICS
■ Some scenery is lovely, but the player characters are pointy, boxy, and not very attractive or lifelike.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — 3

SOUND
■ Excellent sound for the most part, ambient sound is appropriate where it needs to be.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — 3

MULTIPLAYER
■ This is multi-player only and has an easy to use interface, but the gameplay can be quite boring.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — 3

PROS: Great solo adventuring when you want it; Cool spell effects; Allegiance system and unique monsters to battle.

CONS: Boring dungeons and monsters, confusing spells, graphically lacking, gameplay, lots of silly hats.

OVERALL
A good entry title to online RPG games, but it's not as interesting as the rich world of EverQuest.

3 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★

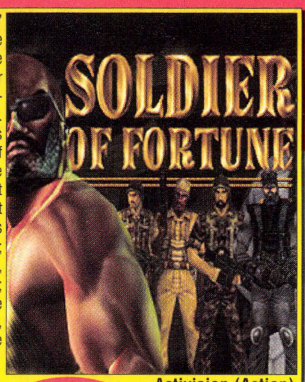
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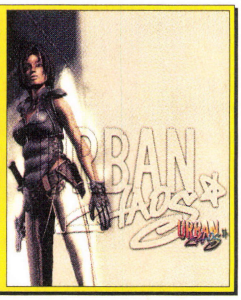
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Bungie (Action)
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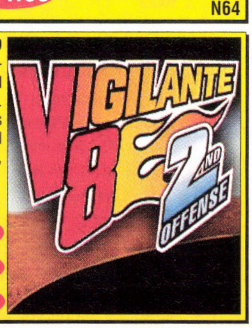
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Release: 02/00
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Nintendo (Strategy)
Release: 1/00
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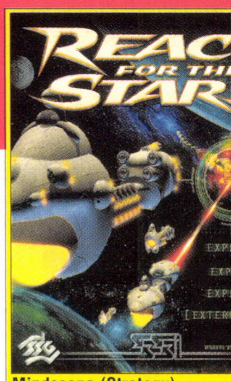
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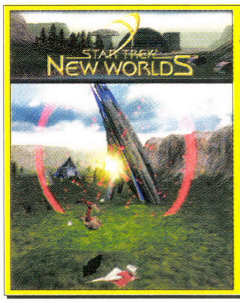


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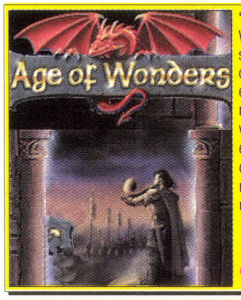
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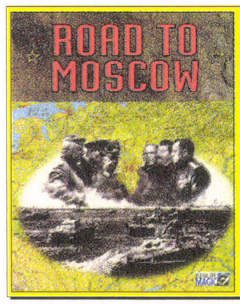


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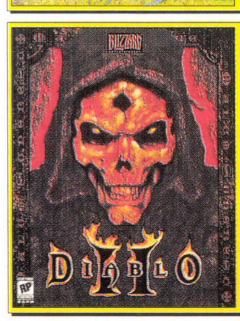
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Soul Survivor

OMIKRON: THE NOMAD SOUL Is a Game With Heart, Soul, and Rock 'n' Roll

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Eidos** ■ DEVELOPER **Quantic Dream** ■ GENRE **Adventure** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$49.95**

GAME GLANCE

- 40 Possible Reincarnations
- 1 Aging Rock Star
- 4 Unique Cities
- 1 Big Ugly Demon Lord

In time, computer games as art, like indie films as art, will grow to be the convention, not the exception. And who better to lead the way than the king of art rock, David Bowie?

By Nikki Douglas

You begin *Omikron: The Nomad Soul* as a transplanted soul inside police detective Kay'l, who seems fairly normal.

But where in blazes are you? And what are you doing here? And what the hell was that thing that tried to rearrange your face in the warehouse that you appeared in? The mysteries just keep on coming.

Don't Get Too Comfortable.

Kay'l will be your first bodily host, but he sure won't be your last. When he is killed in the line of duty or you decide (with the help of a little black magic) to transfer your soul into another host, you'll continue the game in the body of another character...and another...and another. And if you ever want to get home, you'll have to find out what is terrorizing Omikron and how to defeat it.

The Naughty Bits

What do you notice immediately about the world called Omikron? The women are gorgeous and don't wear much more than a few strategically placed strips of cloth. These French-inspired beauties litter the game like armless statues litter the Louvre. But don't worry, you get inside a few of them too. Well, your soul will, that is.

As Syao the jewel thief and Betsy the journalist, you live life on the high-heeled boot side for a while, at least long enough to run into the Thin White Duke, who appears at a local coffee house with his band.

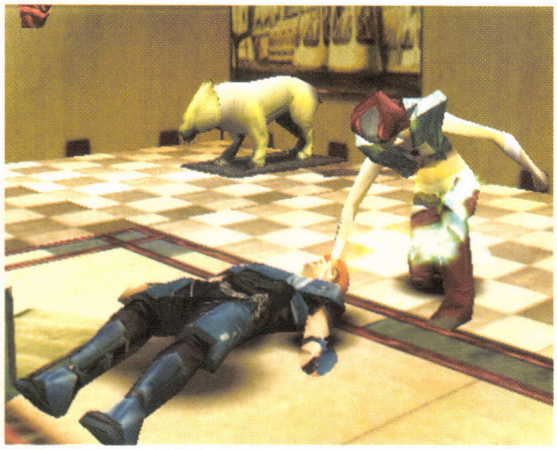
The first thing that catches your eye about Bowie's character is how young he is. Ah, the magic of virtual existence. The second thing is the music—the band is for real, as they play songs from Bowie's current hit album, *hours...*, which was composed



LOOK INTO MY EYES Making eye contact with this guy might be a bad idea.



BIKINI LINE This boxing beauty shows off more than just her kicks.



YOU'RE GONNA BE LATE FOR SCHOOL After a hard night of drinking, Frank needed a kick in the head to get up in the morning.

entirely for the game with guitar superstar and Bowie writing partner Reeves Gabrels.

If you want a souvenir of the CD, it's available in the game at a local record shop—or just transfer your soul into Iman, Bowie's wife, who appears in the game as well. She has the entire Bowie gametrack collection in her apartment.

You will run into Bowie again, this time as the virtual presence named Boz, a dude who has uploaded his conscious self to the multiplan where he has been kicking evil ass for two centuries. He is instrumental in helping you refine your plan and in discovering the true evil behind the brutal slayings in Omikron.

It's a demon. Pretty much the mutha of all demons. And, of course, it's after you and wants to suck your soul out through your nostrils. Boz will gravely inform you that you must face and vanquish this demon. This is the challege that will drive your stay in Omikron.

The women are gorgeous and don't wear much more than a few strategically placed strips of cloth.

You will find it difficult to tear yourself away from *Omikron.* It will all start to make sense after a while—somewhere out there lies a parallel universe.

Alternate Insanity

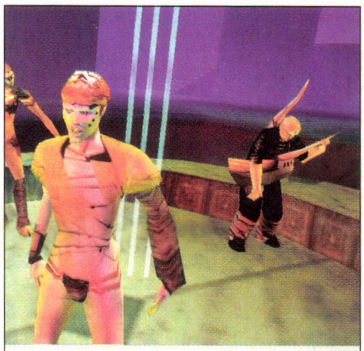
Omikron is not an easy game, and this is its predominant fault. There are times when you find yourself utterly frustrated and lost in the city, wondering what you should do next or thinking that you've already talked to everyone you could, so now what?

There may even be times when you must walk away from the game, take a breather, and figure out what the hell you can do before you go buy the strategy guide. Fortunately, the world encourages exploration, and there are no barriers. Events take place in a suspended real-time, so there is no chance of the world just blowing up while you are still trying to get out of the first city.

If you do finish the game you'll find your soul back in the body from which it came, and the game-world will be quiet. Quiet, that is, except for the chatter in your head coming from all of the 1,000 different voices you encountered in this alternate universe.



SHINE HEAD My soul just entered her body. Omygod! I forgot my face!



ANDROGYNIZE YOURSELF

Virtual Rock 'n' Roll Show

Feel like going to a concert, but you've blown your last $50 on *Omikron: The Nomad Soul?* Never fear, you can see a David Bowie concert right in the game.

David Bowie gives several concerts in game as part of a band that seems to make the rounds of Omikron. Here are a few tips to get you into the first concert that the band plays, the song, "Dreamers."

The concert takes place at Harvey's Bar in Qalisar and you need to have the flyer to get into the bar. (You can pick up the flyer in Jenna's apartment.) Once you get to Jaunpur, however, it is too late to see the show, so make sure when you find Harvey's Bar to go in immediately, because there is no backtracking.

Once inside you can explore the bar a bit; you will see the band standing around the bartender. It might take a bit of walking around, but there is a programmed point that you hit someplace in the bar that causes the band to get up and start to play. Once they do this your perspective changes to watch the show.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

- MINIMUM SPEC 200MHz & 32MB
- PREFERRED SPEC 266MHz PII & 64MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

- Software Rendering ✓
- Direct3D ✓
- 3dfx ✓
- OpenGL ✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

- EAX (SBLive!) ✓
- Aureal 3D ✗

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

- MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT
  Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN N/A, Internet N/A
- CD FOR EACH PLAYER? N/A
- MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION N/A

The Verdict — Omikron: The Nomad Soul

HOW THEY COMPARE

- **Nocturne** — A good action-adventure set in a very creepy film noir environment.
- **Omikron** — A very engrossing universe will make you never want to leave.
- **Sanitarium** — Its unique storyline and incredibly scary plotline make it a classic.
- **Journeyman Project III** — This was educational adventuring at its best. Looks a little dated now, though.
- **Lands of Lore III** — This is a fine example of what happens when adventure games go bad.

GRAPHICS

■ The Moebius-inspired art looks fantastic; the environments look like a French *Blade Runner.*

0 1 2 3 5 — 4

SOUND

■ The music and sound effects are film-soundtrack quality; It's great to have David Bowie involved in the process.

0 1 2 5 — 4

MULTIPLAYER

■ *Omikron* does not support multiplayer gaming.

0 1 2 3 4 — X

PROS: Totally realized, immersive, virtual world that captures your attention and holds on for dear life.

CONS: The game is too short and too difficult; Bowie's character isn't in enough scenes; runs slowly at times.

OVERALL

This is an immersive, original, thought-provoking game. Aside from a few slowdowns here and there, it's a great gaming experience.

4 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★



HOT WHEELS
Man, that's one smokin' paint-job.

Bring Back the Funk

Activision Serves Up the '80s–With Extra Cheese–in INTERSTATE '82

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Activision** ■ DEVELOPER **Activision Studios** ■ GENRE **Action** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$49.99**

GAME GLANCE

- 25 Weapons
- 40 Total Missions
- 3 Devo Tracks
- Countless Painful Quips
- Miami Vice Wannabe

While better technically than its predecessor, *Interstate '76*, in nearly every way, *Interstate '82* falls a bit flat thanks to an extremely high cheese factor that, let's face it, is a by-product of its era.

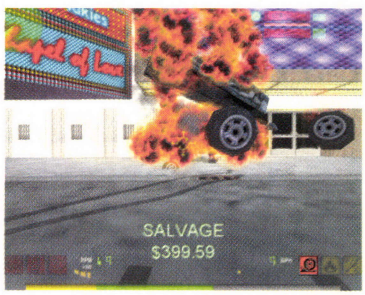
By Steve Klett

Buckle-up *Interstate '76* fans: It's time to upgrade that 8-track to a cassette-player, pop-in the *Miami Vice* soundtrack, put on a white T-shirt and pastel blazer, and put the pedal to the metal.

At least that's what Activision would have you believe with the 1980s version of its vehicular combat game.

The trouble is that while *Interstate '82* has received a major facelift, the gameplay remains largely unchanged. This leaves you with way too much time to focus on the new setting–the '80s. Thinking back, just about everything I can remember about the '80s–the music, the clothes, the TV shows, and even the cars–was cheesy. And *Interstate '82*, whether on purpose or completely by accident–captures that essense all too well.

I can admit it. There was a time when I liked '80s music–Devo, in particular, was one of my favorites. However, that time was long–and quite happily–forgotten until I played



CREEPER CREOLE That's one Creeper that woulda been better off takin' the bus.

Interstate '82. Expecting the style and attitude of the original, I was met instead with a level of cheese never before seen in a game.

Remember Taurus from *Interstate '76*? Well instead of the wide-lapel shirt, vest, bell-bottoms, and big ol' 'fro, he's now spouting bad poetry in a pastel suit straight out of Don Johnson's closet, and his 'fro has been trimmed back and slicked up with oil. He's still got serious attitude, but he's not nearly as bad as he was.

Gone is the style of original game's movies, which featured polygonal renderings of the game's characters that had a highly artistic quality that suited the game well. These are replaced by traditional rendered movies that are of average quality and are not nearly as entertaining. But they do set the game's story and propel you through the game.

It seems Groove Champion—that stoner dude you helped avenge his sister's death with a little help from Taurus in the original game—has gone AWOL while on a deep undercover mission for the Auto Vigilante Guild. His little sister, Skye—awful mohawk and all—misses her big brother and wants Taurus to help her find him. As Taurus, you'll soon find out that "helping" Skye pretty much means doing everything by yourself as you embark on a series of missions to find Groove Champion and foil the bad guys' plans once again.

As far as the game's villains go, "The Creepers" are back, but they're not much smarter than before. They do have much less original characters and bear very "clever" names like Rank Dick, and Mr. Big. And, with some of the lines spouted during the game, I'd almost swear the game was produced under the tutelage of Beavis and Butt-head. "He said, 'deep mine,' huh-huh, huh-huh," is one such example. Ouch.

Just about everything I can remember about the '80s was cheesy. And *Interstate '82* captures that essence all too well.



AWFUL EIGHTIES You know you can get killed for looking like that. And I'm gonna be the one to put you out of my misery.



MALL RAT Now you can also take your fights inside. This is like that scene in *The Blues Brothers* where they drive through a mall. Okay, well, they were driving at least.

Driving Me Crazy

The gameplay is very true to that of *Interstate '76*—with one major exception—you can get out of your car and hoof it with either a first- or third-person view of the action. If your car is about to go up in flames, you can jump out and "jack" a new ride with the aid of your trusty .45.

Hit a Creeper behind the wheel with a headshot (thankfully, much harder to do than in *Interstate '76*) and you can take over his car. You'll also need to rely on your feet to pull a few switches and levers from time to time in order to open various blocked routes in the game. But don't think you can *Quake* your way through the game—you're a sitting duck when outside of your ride.

You cars now look much better, thanks to *Interstate '82*'s use of Activision's 3D-hardware-required "Dark Engine," which made its debut in *Heavy Gear II*. The environments are just as sprawling as those in *Interstate '76* but they look stunning this time around. Sure there's a fair amount of "pop-in" (buildings appearing suddenly on the horizon) but I'll take that over endless clipping and collision-detection problems any day (both bugaboos plagued *Interstate '76*).

Save It for Later

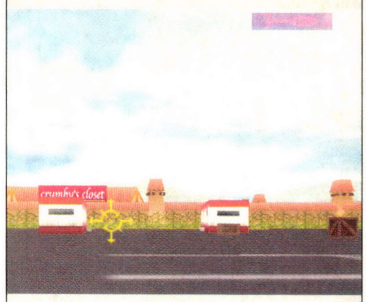
While the ability to leave your car and the improved visuals are very

JUMPING FOR JOY

Daredevils

Interstate '82's Puzzles Will Inspire the Evel Knievel in You

At first, some of the puzzles in *Interstate '82* seem insurmountable. But with a little thought, patience, and, at times, blind luck, you can solve them. Just remember that while the game is difficult, there is almost always a solution to be found somewhere in the level. Keep trying.



WHAT THE.... How am I supposed to get over that wall?



OH, OKAY Frustrated, I shoot the trailer and presto—one instant ramp!

Test Center — Interstate '82

UP AND RUNNING

INSTALLATION

+ Installation is fast and simple
+ Seamlessly detects hardware
+ No installation glitches
- Requires a lot of hard drive space
- A 3D accelerator card is required
- Game looks blocky at low resolutions

ACCESSIBILITY

+ The interface is easy to use
+ The cars are easy to control
+ Good tutorial helps you ease into the game and stay away from the manual
- You can only save between levels, which makes the game a lot harder

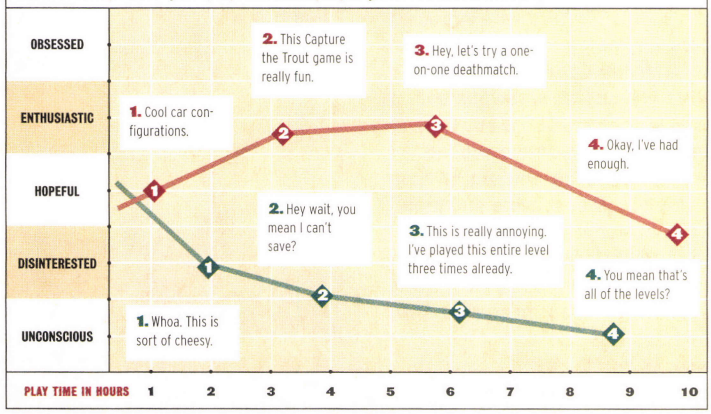
GRAPHICS PERFORMANCE CHART

		PROCESSOR ▶	Pentium 166		Pentium II 233		Pentium II 350		Pentium II 450		AMD Athlon 700	
		SYSTEM RAM ▶	32	64	32	64	32	64	32	64	32	64
Voodoo Diamond Monster 3D	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
Voodoo2 Diamond Monster 3D II	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
Voodoo3 3dfx Voodoo3 3000	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
RAGE 128 All-in-Wonder 128	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
Matrox G400 Millennium G400	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
TNT 2 Creative 3D Blaster TNT2 Ultra	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
S4 Savage Diamond Stealth III S540	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											
Software	640 x 480											
	800 x 600											
	1024 x 768											

WHAT IT MEANS — Forget it! — Runs poorly — Acceptable — With ease

THE INTEREST CHART

Interstate '82's **single-player** game is a let down, and you can't save whenever you want, which makes for repetitive gameplay. The **multiplayer** game is much more fun.



Don't think you can *Quake* your way through the game—you're a sitting duck when outside of your ride.



KILLS FOR CASH How much is the life of a Creeper worth?

welcome additions, *Interstate '82* repeats one of the more frustrating features of its predecessor. There is still no ability to save a game during a mission. I can appreciate that this is to increase the challenge-factor a bit, as the missions are a tad on the short side. However, many of the missions contain a single sequence near the end that is extremely difficult, and if you fail you'll need to keep repeating the entire mission until you get it right. That's not fun. That's just plain frustrating. The option to save should be there for auto vigilantes that want it: the ones who don't want it don't need to use it.

And again, as in *Interstate '76*, the single-player campaign is much too short. Many of the 17 canned missions take just a few minutes to complete, and it's possible to complete the game with less than 10 hours behind the wheel. Sure you can go through it again at a higher difficulty level, but there is no option to play through it again as a different character or to achieve different goals.

The intelligence of the computer-controlled Creepers still leaves



IT'S A BIRD Don't play this game if you're afraid of heights. Thank goodness he opted for the super-soft tires.



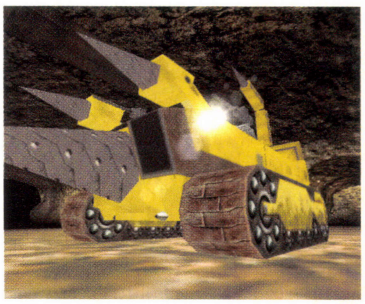
EASY RIDER What a beautiful day to wage a little vehicular warfare. I'm sure some stupid Creeper will ruin it soon.

much to be desired as well. More often than not they'll simply rush at you and ram you, making it possible to easily pick them off from a distance. And often times I witnessed a Creeper try to climb an impassable wall or ram into a wall repeatedly—right next to an opening—until the Creeper's car exploded.

The flexibility of *Interstate '82*'s multiplayer game may make up for this for many players, however. You get three different game options: Kill Fest, Hot Potato, and Capture the Trout. The first, as you'd expect, is straight deathmatch. The second is that childhood game we all remember only with cars—you have to tag another car before the "potato" (read: bomb) you're carrying explodes. And the third is a variant of Capture the Flag where a trout represents the flag.

With the ability to play team vs. team, cooperatively against AI opponents or combinations of human and AI opponents, or every driver for themselves, there's more depth here than you might think. And with 30 cars that you can customize with 40 different weapons and special abilities and your own custom paint-job, *Interstate '82*'s got some potentially long multiplayer legs indeed.

For me, however, the single-player game is just too dated and the terrible save game convention is the final nail in the coffin as far as this reviewer is concerned. *Interstate '76* left me thinking the '70s were cool. *Interstate '82* just left me glad that the '80s—like the game—were over.



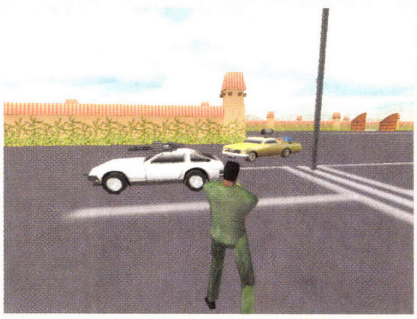
BOSS CREEPER Someone's not playing fair. And me without my Panzer tank....

Need a New Ride? Get Out and Jack One

Stealin' someone else's ride in *Interstate '82* is not just encouraged, at times it's required. But don't fret, it's as easy as 1-2-3. Here's the best way to get out of your old jalopy and into a hot new ride with just the touch of a trigger.



CAR SHOPPING His ride a bit beat-up, Taurus spots a potential new set of wheels.



TIME FOR A LITTLE TEST DRIVE He hops out for a closer look and asks politely for a drive—not.



GOT A LEMON A simple press of the X key and he's the proud owner—of an equally beat-up ride. Doh!

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

MINIMUM SPEC	233MHz & 64MB
PREFERRED SPEC	300MHz & 128MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

Software Rendering	✗
Direct3D	✓
3dfx	✓
OpenGL	✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

EAX (SBLive!)	✗
Aureal 3D	✗

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT	
Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 8, Internet 8	
CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	Yes
MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	28.8k

The Verdict

Interstate '82

HOW THEY COMPARE

Interstate '76
Same as *I-'82* but set in the '70's and with more style.

Interstate '82
Better graphics, and you can jump out of your car, but-high cheese factor.

Redline Gang
Warfare with cars and cool visuals, but it never did too well on store shelves.

Midtown Madness
Vehicular mayhem without the weapons and cheesy '80s theme.

Driver
Nice visuals, huge cities to explore, but no multiplayer.

GRAPHICS
Hardware-only engine equals lots of eye-candy, although the cars could look better.

0 1 2 3 5 — 4

SOUND
Appropriately annoying soundtrack, combat and vehicle effects are well-done. The Devo songs redeem all.

0 1 2 3 5 — 4

MULTIPLAYER
Capture The Trout is a blast, and there are lots of multiplayer options and different weapons to use.

0 1 2 3 5 — 4

PROS: Cool concept; lots of weapons and car configurations; large game maps; Devo is on the soundtrack.

CONS: Extremely cheesy characters and sound-bites; frustrating gameplay; the save-gave convention is terrible.

OVERALL

Sometimes good ideas are not the best ideas—this would have been a more enjoyable game if it stayed in the '70s.

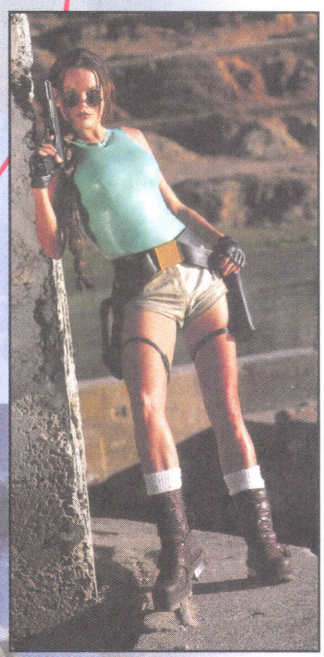
3 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆


Pot











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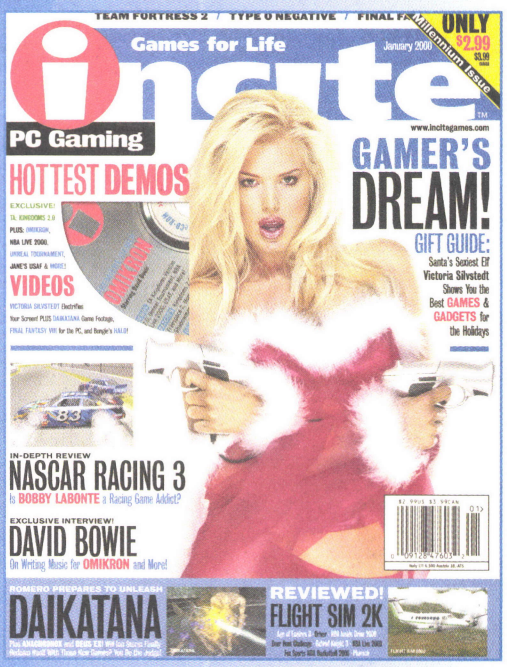
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ato Buds



ARE WE NOT MEN? The men in Devo have a truly uncontrollable urge to game.

The guys in **Devo** haven't burned out or faded away. Instead, they've contributed three unreleased tunes to *Interstate '82*. Paul Semel speaks to the new traditionalists.

Nobody would fault you for thinking Devo had gone the way of the dodo. But they've hardly been extinct. They've been writing music for *Rugrats*, *Dumb and Dumber*, and *Crash Bandicoot* through their company, Mutato Muzika, and now they've contributed a trio of unreleased tunes to the *Interstate '82* soundtrack. Here's what they have to say for themselves.

Where did the unreleased Devo songs in *Interstate '82* come from?
Mark Mothersbaugh: For any album we ever did there were three times as many songs as we needed; These are three of those extra songs.

Why did you decide to release them on *Interstate '82*, though?
Gerald V. Casale: Somebody asked us. I know that sounds like a commercial one-liner, but it's true. It also made sense because the period the game covers happened to be the period, by one year difference, that we wrote those songs: right at the end of writing for *New Traditionalists* [from 1981] but before *Oh No! It's Devo!* [1982].

You put out a Devo game once, *The Adventures of the Smart Patrol*.
Gerald: Yeah, we took a movie that we wanted to make that never got made and turned it into a game.
Bob Casale: But it was too fast and frenetic for most people.
Gerald: And the technology was too slow, and the characters looked awful. It needed the *Doom* engine, basically. It had thinking and plotting *and* violence. It's just that the violence didn't work.

Do you have any plans to revamp the game and put it out again?
Gerald: I'd love that, but I don't know where to start. I don't know who to talk to.

Is there any other video game soundtrack stuff in the works?
Mark: No. Maybe we can get involved with *Interstate 2012*.
Gerald: When there's total gridlock.
Bob: "How well can you use your horn?" *(laughs)*

You guys were obsessed with potatoes. Ever been approached by the National Potato Board to do commercials?
Gerald: I wish. We would've done that in a moment.

Do they even have such a thing?
Gerald: I don't think so. But there should be.



SHOOTING STAR PHOTOS

Flat Tire

It Has a Great List of Bands and Awesome Cars, But **TEST DRIVE 6** Offers Little Else

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Infogrames** ■ DEVELOPER **Pitbull Syndicate** ■ GENRE **Driving** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$35**

GAME GLANCE

- 15 Cars
- 14 Tracks
- 12 Songs
- 8 Bands
- 1 Fear Factory Video

You'd think after six tries that the *Test Drive* series could get it right. I know some of you might like it for its fast-paced action and spectacular car crashes, but this is one game where the pros don't outweigh the cons.

By Tasos Kaiafas

You've seen the *Test Drive 6* TV commercial with the cars storming down city streets and bumping into each other and crashing into tables and chairs and...wow! you think. You've got to have this game! Don't be so easily fooled. You know how TV can be. Those diamond earrings on QTV might sparkle under the bright lights, but it's nothing more than cheap cubic zirconia. Besides, why buy *Test Drive 6* when you can buy a real diamond—*Need for Speed: High Stakes*—for the same price?

Like *Need for Speed, Test Drive 6* has a lot of different cars to drive—from an old Dodge Charger to a high-tech Dodge Viper and everything in between—and a lot of different locations to race them in. In *Test Drive 6,* you can access any of them in practice mode, but to actually compete for money, you have to purchase a car. Then you can win money which you can use to either buy upgrades or a new car by competing in races. But unlike *Need for Speed, Test Drive 6* doesn't give you much of a sensation of what it's like to drive one of these dream machines.

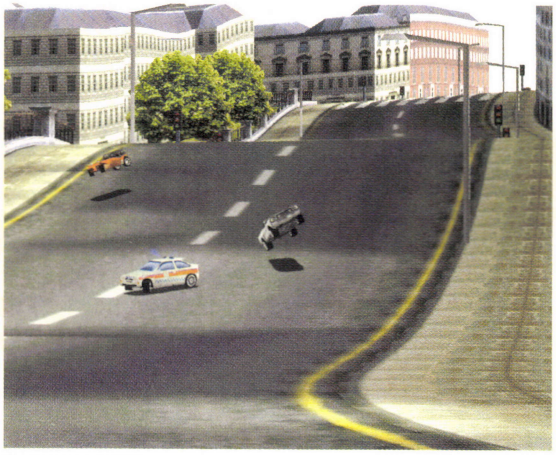


MUSTANG SALLY This baby is rip-roarin' right down the highway.

Although neither game would be classified as a driving simulator, you can really tell the difference in the handling and speed characteristics



UP AND AWAY Strange physics mean you'll be spending as much time in the air as you will on the ground.



BOUNCY, BOUNCY What are these cars' shock absorbers made out of, for Pete's sake? Flubber?

of the cars in *Need for Speed.* And they drive predictably. You can maintain control as you slide around a turn and get a good sense of the car's limitations with a little practice. In *Test Drive 6,* the physics don't aren't very realistic nor predictable, so the cars mostly handle the same way—poorly. Even when you go over a jump in a front-engine car the rear end drops instead of the front.

Additionally, the graphics in *Test Drive 6* are uninteresting, splashing your screen with a subdued color palette that makes you feel like you're driving under eternally gray skies. Although there is a beach location during dusk, with a sky and land awash in reds and oranges, the surroundings never make you want to pull over and just have a look around. (Yes, I have actually done this in *Need for Speed.)*

Of course, you could say that in an action-packed game the environment passes at lightning speed, so who has time to stop and enjoy the view? Maybe so, but most of the tracks in *Test Drive 6* are so tight, a succession of twisting turns lined with walls, that you never get much of a chance to open it up.

When you do get the chance to bolt down a long straightaway, the road is usually warped with bumps and berms, causing you to spend more time in the air than on the road. That's not my idea of fun when I'm behind to wheel of a sports car that sits a few inches off the ground.

The problems in *Test Drive 6* don't stop there. The omission of a status meter whenever the game is loading is very annoying. If you enter a tournament and spend too much of your money on upgrades, you won't have enough cash left to enter the race. Problem is, you can't back out of that area, so you have to reboot your computer. Possibly the most grievous problem of all is that Test *Drive 6* has no multiplayer game support.

Luckily, there's an easy solution to all of these problems: buy *Need for Speed: High Stakes* instead.

The graphics make you feel like you're driving under eternally gray skies.



RAINY DAY The dull color palette used to render the environments in the game will make you depressed.

MINI REVIEW



Test Drive: Off-Road 3

The Tracks Are Better, But....

■ PUBLISHER **Infogrames** ■ DEVELOPER **Pitbull Syndicate** ■ GENRE **Driving** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$35**

The *Off-Road* team finally listened to you and has finally made the tracks more interesting. For example, the track through the Rocky Mountains takes you over some steep elevation changes. You'll have to drop your truck into low gear to make it up some of these sheer faces, which makes racing in this game a bit more interesting.

However, don't think that you're going to get an exciting, realistic off-road racing experience. The trucks in the game seem to drive much daintier than you might expect these lumbering two-tons would over bumps and jumps—they seem to bounce around much more than they should. Some parts of the game, particularly in the menu interfaces, seem to be unfinished, which points to it maybe being a rush job, as the game was ported over from the PlayStation. Somtimes the menu text appears as if somebody recently typed it in.

There's no doubt that this game was designed for the PlayStation crowd. I guess that's where this game sells best—and for good reason.

Overall ★★

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

■ MINIMUM SPEC	233MHz & 32MB
■ PREFERRED SPEC	450MHz & 64MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: **INTEL PENTIUM**

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

■ Software Rendering	✓
■ Direct3D	✓
■ 3dfx	✗
■ OpenGL	✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

■ EAX (SBLive!)	✓
■ Aureal 3D	✗

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

■ MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT	
Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN N/A, Internet N/A	
■ CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	N/A
■ MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	N/A

The Verdict

Test Drive 6

HOW THEY COMPARE

■ **NFS: High Stakes**
Car-handling problems have been improved and the graphics are the best.

■ **Need for Speed III**
Made great strides in graphics, lighting effects, and that polished car finish.

■ **Demolition Racer**
Like *Test Drive,* it doesn't live up to the standards of a PC driving game.

■ **Test Drive: Off Road**
Weak physics and uninteresting car handling mar a few improvements.

■ **Test Drive 6**
Maybe they'll get it right in *Test Drive 7,* but then, they should have by now.

GRAPHICS

■ Dull and bland; like racing under gray skies without much chance of clearing; some glitches.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — **2**

SOUND

■ Great music tracks, but engine sounds are barely audible while driving; most of the cars sound the same.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — **3**

MULTIPLAYER

■ *Test Drive 6* has no mutliplayer support.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — **X**

PROS: Some good music to listen to; lots of different cars to drive.

CONS: All of the cars handle similarly; bad physics make the cars handle poorly and unpredictably; no multiplayer mode means no racing with friends.

OVERALL

If you want to play this kind of racing game, run out right now and get *Need for Speed: High Stakes.*

1 OUT OF 5

★

The Final Frontier

STAR TREK: HIDDEN EVIL Leaves Us Still Dreaming of a Good *Star Trek* Title

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Activision** ■ DEVELOPER **Presto Studios** ■ GENRE **Adventure** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$39.99 collectors edition**

GAME GLANCE

- Dozens of 2D Rendered Backgrounds
- 1 Tri-corder
- 2 Alien Races That Don't Get Along
- 1 Vulcan Nerve Pinch
- 1 Captain Who Says, "Engage."

Just like the ant who thinks he can move that rubber tree plant, we've got high hopes that someone, someday will make the definitive *Star Trek* game. *Star Trek: Hidden Evil* is not it.

By Nikki Douglas

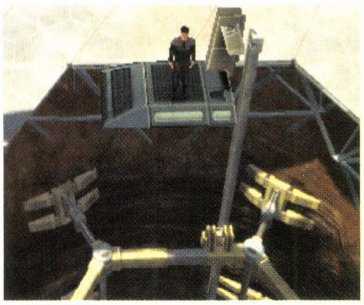
This third-person adventure game finds you portraying half-Human/half-Vulcan Ensign Sovok on his first mission assisting Captain Picard and Data with the discovery of an important Ba'ku archeological discovery on the Ba'ku homeworld, a place renowned for its fountain of youth effects.

While Ensign Sovok works with the Captain and Data, the Son'a, who were the bad guys in the film *Star Trek: Insurrection,* are on the same planet trying to build their own colony.

The opening movie is a stellar intro to the game, and right away, the various *Star Trek*-inspired touches (an actual working tri-corder, a *Star Trek*-esque player interface that looks like it was lifted from the bridge of the *Enterprise)* create a high level of immersive ambiance. Yet there is precious little gameplay in this trussed up, fancy, good-looking package.



I JUST DON'T KNOW YOU ANYMORE Data and Sovok's break-up got a little ugly.



DON'T JUMP! Sovok taking the split with Data a little too hard.

Lights, Camera...Action?

You are introduced to Ensign Sovok in a holo-deck training session where he is learning how to use the Vulcan nerve pinch. Sovok was not raised on Vulcan, and this becomes apparent as he is far too excited for an emotionless Vulcan about getting to hang out with Captain Picard and Data. During the training session you find out that your phaser has auto-target and that robotic drones are much too easy to kill. True action is still absent in a Star Trek game.

Once Ensign Sovok hooks up with Data and the Captain on the Ba'ku homeworld, all hell breaks loose and the Captain is kidnapped. Some of the colonizing Son'a try to shoot poor Ensign Sovok with their energy blasters while he attempts to find Captain Picard. This is your first clue that all is not well between the Ba'ku and Son'a.

Eventually, Ensign Sovok helps find the Captain and stop the Son'a rebels and makes a pivotal discovery concerning the archeological dig. But here's where the gameplay starts to break down.

Unbeknownst to Ensign Sovok, there is an invisible force-field around the archeological dig site that prevents him from leaving. No, wait, scratch that. It's not part of the story line—it's part of the game. When Ensign Sovok approaches a place in the 2D rendered landscape that is not part of the script, he runs against it like he's on a treadmill. It's awfully sad to see this in a game that could have taken the *Star Trek* franchise by the horns.

Stick to the Script

For an adventure game, there is sadly not very much adventure going on in *Hidden Evil.* You are



I'VE GOTTA GO Counselor Troy pretends to hear someone calling her to avoid Sovok.

confined to scripted events, and it removes any freeform thinking or even the illusion of freeform thinking. There will be no "adapt and overcome" in this game. This linear path is laid in stone and there are no deviations.

For example, Ensign Sovok must retrieve an artifact from Captain Picard for Data to analyze, and until he does this, he cannot have a conversation with Data, nor can he move forward in the story.

What the game does have going for it, besides evocative graphics and faithfully drawn *Star Trek* characters, is first class voice acting from Patrick Stewart, Brent Spiner, and newcomer Christopher Gorham.

Voice acting can destroy a good game but it can't necessarily save a mediocre one. In this case, the voice acting is so good that all it does is make the game seem even more pedestrian. *Hidden Evil* is an eminently forgettable game and quietly passes the torch to the next *Star Trek* game contender.

We've got high hopes that someone, someday will make the definitive *Star Trek* game.

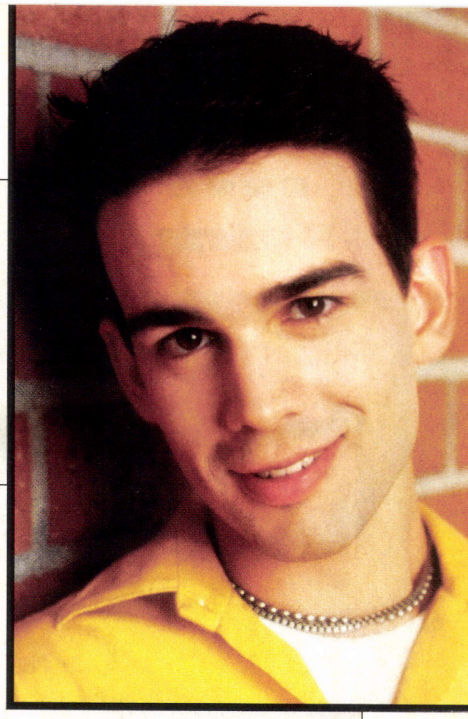


ALONE TIME Picard and Ensign Sovok "get to know each other" a little better in a secluded spot.

CHRISTOPHER GORHAM Q&A

Make It So, Ensign

To fans of *Star Trek: Hidden Evil,* Actor Christopher Gorham will always be the voice of Ensign Sovok. Paul Semel questions his prime directive.



How did you get involved with the game?
I just went in and auditioned. It was just like a regular audition for anything else.

Did landing this part hold any great significance for you? Are you a big *Star Trek* fan?
I was a mild fan of *Star Trek* when I was growing up. I watched *Next Generation* for a while, though I haven't watched *Deep Space Nine* or *Voyager*. But the best thing about this was that I got to watch Patrick Stewart do his stuff, that was really exciting. I'm a big fan of his.

Did you get to work in the recording studio with Patrick Stewart at all? Or with Brent Spiner?
No, I didn't even meet Brent Spiner.

So it wasn't like you were in there, trading lines with Picard, then?
No, no. They don't record you at the same time, they do you one person at a time.

How do you prepare for something like this? Did they show you what your character would look like?
[They showed me] very little. They had an artist's rendering of what the character was going to look like, but it didn't really help all that much. Basically, they just sat down and talked about where he was coming from, that he's half human, half Vulcan. His psychology is very Vulcan, he's kind of reserved because of that, though as the game goes along he kind of loosens up. So we started there, and then I just kind of played with it.

Did you have time to bring out Sovok's personality traits?
Well, the way they set it up was that there were only three days of recording, and they were separated by a month each. It's like you go in one day, and then you have nothing for a month, month and a half, and then you come in again. So it was kind of difficult to keep the continuity. You have to trust that the director knows what he wants.

Did you have any trouble with the infamous *Star Trek* technobabble?
I think I've watched the show enough to know most of it. But there were definitely a couple times where I was like, "How do you want me to say this? What is this?"

What was your favorite line?
Anytime I got say "Captain Picard" or "Aye, Captain," that was fun.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY
- MINIMUM SPEC 200MHz & 32MB
- PREFERRED SPEC 266MHz PII & 32MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM

GRAPHICS SUPPORT
- Software Rendering ✓
- Direct3D ✓
- 3dfx ✓
- OpenGL ✗

AUDIO SUPPORT
- EAX (SBLive!) ✓
- Aureal 3D ✗

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS
- MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT

Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN N/A, Internet N/A
- CD FOR EACH PLAYER? N/A
- MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION N/A

The Verdict — Star Trek: Hidden Evil

HOW THEY COMPARE

- **Starfleet Command** It's not easy, but this strategy game is probably the best one of the lot.
- **Star Trek: A Final Unity** A fair attempt at a good *Star Trek* game, but not stellar.
- **ST Judgment Rites** An oldy but a goody, Interplay's adventure game used the original cast.
- **Star Trek Hidden Evil** Poor programming and ultra-linear storyline doom this effort.
- **Star Trek: Generations** Admit it - did you even play this? One of the worst games ever.

GRAPHICS
■ Decent 3D, truthfully rendered 2D backgrounds, characters look good more or less.

0 1 2 4 5 — 3

SOUND
■ Great music; cinematic in nature; sound effects are believable, although they could be improved.

0 1 2 4 5 — 3

MULTIPLAYER
■ *Star Trek: Hidden Evil* does not support multiplayer.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — X

PROS: Excellent, evocative voice acting; interesting story; decent looking graphics in places.

CONS: Too scripted; your character runs in place if he tries to go somewhere he "shouldn't."

OVERALL
This is not the *Star Trek* ultra-game we've been waiting for. In fact, it's not even close to that game.

2 OUT OF 5

★★☆☆☆

"...resistance is futile."

- PC Accelerator



"A virtually flawless masterpiece"

- Future Gamer

"... will shake up the gaming landscape"

- CNET

" a next-generation game in every sense..."

- The Adrenaline Vault

"The 3D shooter for the next millennium."

- gamesmania.com

"...I have to tell you, it's pretty damn cool"

- IGN.com

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One for the Kiddies

The **TOY STORY 2 ACTION GAME** Tries to Take Advantage of the Movie's Massive Popularity

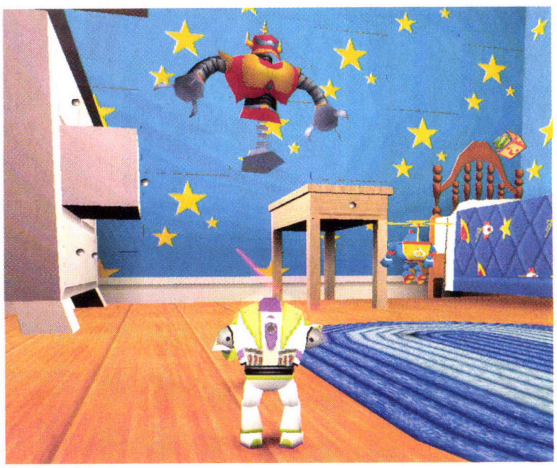
FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Disney Interactive** ■ DEVELOPER **Traveller's Tales** ■ GENRE **Action** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone)** ■ PRICE **$29.99**

GAME GLANCE
- 15 Worlds
- 5 Bosses
- 1 Lucrative Sequel

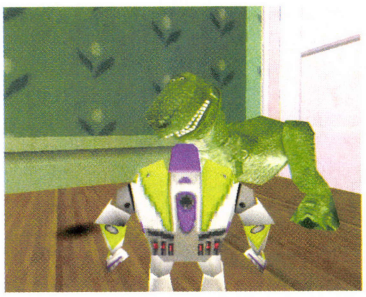
Before moviegoers had even taken their seats to see *Toy Story 2* Disney had their vaunted marketing machine poised and at the ready. A computer game was too good for them to pass up.

By William O'Neal

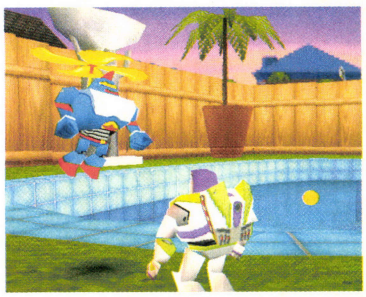
In the *Toy Story 2 Action Game* gamers follow a plot that is identical to that of the *Toy Story 2* movie. Woody, played by Tom Hanks in both the game and the movie, is stolen by an evil toy collector, played by Wayne Knight (better known as *Seinfeld's* Newman), and Buzz Lightyear, once again played by Tim Allen, is called upon to save him.



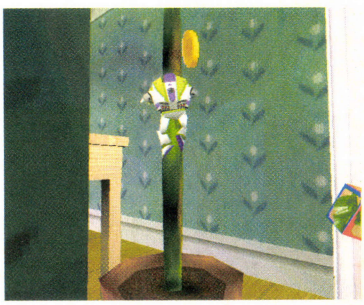
DIE ROBOT DIE! One of Emperor Zurg's infinitely spawning bad guys comes out to crush our hero, Buzz.



NEUROTIC T. REX The world's only codependent dinosaur is back.



ANYONE FOR A SWIM? If he wasn't pressed for time, Buzz would welcome a nice dip.



SHIMMY SHIMMY! Buzz likes to climb. Think of him as a little plastic Lara Croft.

Designed for gamers age eight years old and up, *Toy Story 2* is definitely a kid's game: the less-than-stellar graphics and simplistic controls are a testament to this. Don't get us wrong, though, any ankle-biter who gets his dirty little mitts on this title is gonna love it.

The game starts out in Andy's room and continues through 15 different worlds, and gameplay consists mostly of console-like jumping puzzles and item collection. Buzz's arsenal of high-tech gizmos, like his rocket-jet boots and grappling hook, mix things up, but blowing up Emperor Zurg's evil robots gets old quickly. The game's third-person perspective is intuitive, but the wildly swinging camera made it difficult for this 29-year-old to navigate some of the areas.

The game contains all of the toys from both *Toy Story* movies including Mr. and Mrs. Potato Head, RC, Rex, and Bo Peep, just to name a few. This game's biggest appeal is its connection to the movies, and people who enjoyed them will enjoy the game—for a few minutes. Lacking any multiplayer at all, gamers will be hard pressed to find any reason to play this game repeatedly.

Barring a directive from one's editor-in-chief, it's difficult to find a reason to finish the game—period, especially since you know how the story ends.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

■ MINIMUM SPEC	166MHz & 32MB
■ PREFERRED SPEC	200MHz & 32MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: **INTEL PENTIUM**

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

■ Software Rendering	✔
■ Direct3D	✔
■ 3dfx	✔
■ OpenGL	✘

AUDIO SUPPORT

■ EAX (SBLive!)	✘
■ Aureal 3D	✘

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

■ MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT

Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN N/A, Internet N/A

■ CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	N/A
■ MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	N/A

The Verdict — Toy Story 2 Action Game

HOW THEY COMPARE

■ **Nerf Arena Blast**
It uses the *Unreal* engine, so it's hard not to like this non-lethal deathmatch.

■ **LEGO Racers**
In this game you get to both build your race car and compete with it.

■ **South Park**
It's hard to believe that this game is actually better than something, but it is.

■ **The Toy Story 2 Game**
A thrown-together attempt to ride the Toy Story 2 merchandising wave.

■ **Backstreet Boys**
This is the most pitiful excuse for a game we've ever seen.

GRAPHICS
■ The graphics are chunky as can be, and that goes for 3D hardware mode too; the camera view swings wildly.

0 1 3 4 5 **2**

SOUND
■ The voices are great, but the silly theme song in the background will have you stabbing pencils in your ears.

0 1 2 4 5 **3**

MULTIPLAYER
■ The *Toy Story 2 Action Game* does not have a multiplayer mode.

0 1 2 3 4 5 **X**

PROS: Junior's going to love this game for about as long as eight-year-olds love anything.

CONS: The graphics are uninspired and the gameplay is so linear that there's little "real" puzzle solving to do.

OVERALL

If you're an adult, don't expect to like this game much. If you're a young'un, you'll probably like it.

3 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

10 Yards Shy

NFL BLITZ Used to Be Great, but Midway Messes Up the 2000 Edition of This Fun Arcade Classic

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Infogrames** ■ DEVELOPER **Midway** ■ GENRE **Sports** ■ PLAYERS **1-4** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$27.99**

GAME GLANCE

- 1 Terrible Interface
- 33 NFL Teams
- 3,000 Crushing Hits per Game
- 4 Six-minute Quarters per Game

***NFL Blitz 2000's* slogan pretty much says it all: No refs, no rules, no mercy. Too bad they forget one thing: no interface.**

By Joe Vallina

If the NFL was run by the World Wrestling Federation, this is what it would look like. Defensive linemen body slam quarterbacks, receivers who have caught three passes in a row are on fire—literally, and helmets fly off noggins more often than the Bengals beg for mercy.

In this very loose interpretation of a pro football game, the action is fast and furious, period. There are no running plays, there are no pass interference calls, there are no late hits. In fact, you're encouraged to do a flying body slam onto the lifeless corpse of the guy you just crushed into oblivion. (Don't worry, he'll resuscitate for the next play.)

NFL Blitz has always been about mindless football fun, but with this year's incarnation you need to be a frickin' brain surgeon just to figure out the interface.

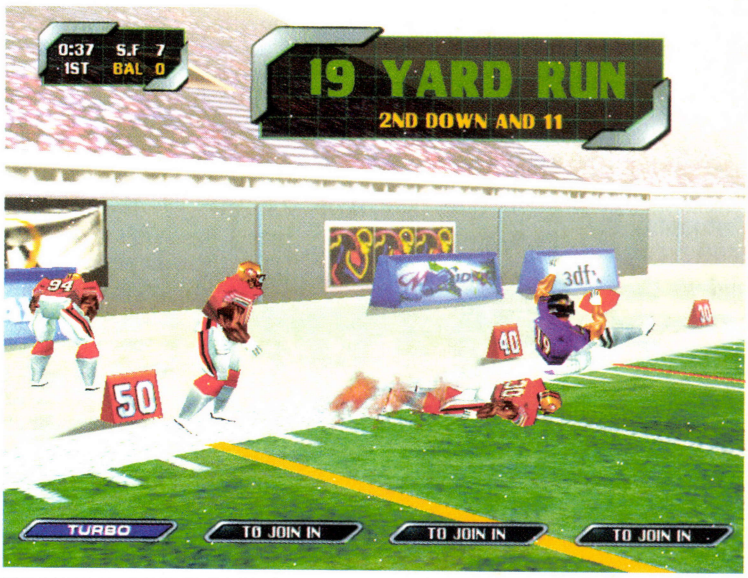
In a move about as smart as Barry Sander's decision to leave the "loser" Lions (who, at this writing, lead the NFC Central), Midway tried to update the look and feel of *NFL Blitz 2000's* interface and ended up completely screwing it up.

To get to a game, you are forced to navigate through a complicated mixture of gamepad and keyboard commands. Instead of simply letting you use the gamepad buttons to scroll and click your way through, at times you have to go to the number pad and poke your way around until you find the right key. Don't bother looking in the manual for a key map, it's not there.

The graphics in *NFL Blitz 2000* look great—the colors are rich and the animations are smooth. This makes the crappy interface doubly disappointing.

If you do manage to make it to the kickoff, you're in for the fast and furious gameplay you've come to expect from *NFL Blitz*. You can juke, stiff-arm, and dive your way through the line and blitz to your heart's content on defense. Randy Moss catching too many passes for your liking? Forget about chucking him at the line—deck his ass! Yancey Thigpin rubbing it in by dancing in the end zone? Knock him into tomorrow! Who cares if the play is over...everything's legal in *NFL Blitz 2000!*

Everything, that is, except ease of use. Here's hoping that Midway gets its act together in time for next year's edition.



YOU GOTTA GET 30 IN THIS LEAGUE Nobody ever claimed that *NFL Blitz* had realistic gameplay, just that it was fun. Too bad the interface is as terrible as the 1999 Niners.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

■ MINIMUM SPEC	233MHz & 8MB
■ PREFERRED SPEC	266MHz & 32MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

■ Software Rendering	✓
■ Direct3D	✓
■ 3dfx	✓
■ OpenGL	✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

■ EAX (SBLive!)	✓
■ Aureal 3D	✓

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

■ MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT
Maximum number of players: PC 4, LAN N/A, Internet N/A

■ CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	N/A
■ MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	N/A

The Verdict — NFL Blitz 2000

HOW THEY COMPARE

■ **NFL Fever 2000**
Microsoft's $20 football game is the best pigskin game out there.

■ **Madden 2000**
Good graphics, but no body slams here, and the interface is clunky.

■ **NFL Blitz 2000**
Looks great, with fun, unrealistic gameplay, but the interface stinks.

■ **Madden 99**
The old *Madden* was the champ until Microsoft put *NFL Fever* in for six.

■ **NFL Gameday 99**
Ugly graphics, unrealistic gameplay, and poor controls.

GRAPHICS
■ The fields look very good, and the game's colors are rich and bright. Player models are a bit chunky, but move realistically.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — **4**

SOUND
■ The sounds are the sounds I can only dream of hearing on a real football field. The crunches, whimpers, and taunting are hilarious.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — **5**

MULTIPLAYER
■ *NFL Blitz 2000* would be perfect to play over a network. Midway took the easy way out and made everyone sit at the same machine.
0 1 2 3 4 5 — **2**

PROS: Great sounds, good graphics, and violent gameplay all combine to make for an entertaining game.

CONS: The interface is so bad that it could make Zack Thomas weep and the multiplayer options are very limited.

OVERALL

If *NFL Blitz 2000's* interface wasn't so horrible, this could be a 4-star game. As it stands now, it's a three.

3 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

Get Out Your Antacid

SWAT 3: CLOSE QUARTER COMBAT Has Some of the Most Tense Gameplay Going

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Sierra** ■ DEVELOPER **Sierra Studios** ■ GENRE **Action** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Mature** ■ PRICE **$44.99**

GAME GLANCE

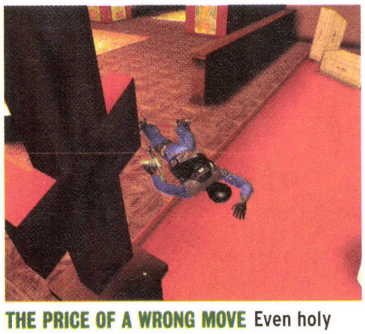
- 4 Team Mates
- 5 Weapons
- 7 Tactical Aids
- 16 Missions
- 10,000,000 Lives on Your Shoulders

Efforts to dethrone the *Rainbow Six* series from its lofty place atop the "tactical shooter" genre have been mired in mediocrity until the creation of *SWAT 3*.

By Di Luo

The greatest accomplishment of *SWAT 3* is the AI that inhabits the game world. Surpassing all others in the genre in both intelligence and ease of control, it does not require the lengthy planning of *Rouge Spear*, and with a few keystrokes you can command your partners to perform a wide variety of tasks. Your teammates, as well as your enemies and the hostages, have a wide range of reactions and act realistically in any situation, even without specific orders.

The game takes place during the week of an international conference in 2005. You lead a team in the LAPD SWAT, given the task of protecting the city from terrorists.



THE PRICE OF A WRONG MOVE Even holy ground won't save your ass.



ON YOUR KNEES! NOW! The preservation of life is your primary goal. Your secondary goal is to make these scum-sucking criminals eat as much lead as possible.

Gameplay in *SWAT 3* requires the utmost use of stealth and caution, punctuated by moments of extreme violence and gut-wrenching tension.

The missions are loosely related and the storyline is sparse compared to *Rainbow Six*, but the varied mission environments and the challenge they provide is more than enough to cover for the brevity of the story. With less killing than *Rogue Spear*, *SWAT 3* requires the utmost use of stealth and caution, punctuated by moments of extreme violence and gut-wrenching tension.

You are not supposed to fire indiscriminately on suspects, and the suspense during that millisecond when they decide on compliance or violence is unparalleled.

Unfortunately, a few omissions in *SWAT 3* detract from its greatness. Though the lack of an in-mission save often forces you to be more careful, it becomes frustrating in difficult operations. One wrong step will mean restarting the scenario.

The biggest problem though, is the lack of a multiplayer mode. Multiplayer would have made this game better than even *Rainbow Six*.

As it stands, *SWAT 3* is still far superior to most other games in the genre and is a must-have for anyone in need of an action game that requires a bit of brains.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

MINIMUM SPEC	233MHz & 32MB
PREFERRED SPEC	266MHz & 64MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM, AMD K6-2

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

Software Rendering	✔
Direct3D	✔
3dfx	✘
OpenGL	✘

AUDIO SUPPORT

EAX (SBLive!)	✘
Aureal 3D	✘

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT	
Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN N/A, Internet N/A	
CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	N/A
MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	N/A

The Verdict — SWAT 3

HOW THEY COMPARE

Rouge Spear
Great action, strategy, and storyline. It's still the king.

SWAT 3
Lack of multiplayer support and a good story hurts an otherwise great title.

Rainbow Six
The ancestor of the "tactical shooter," but it's showing its age nowadays.

Delta Force 2
Buggy and plain. If it had more action it would be tolerable.

Spec Ops II
Worthless AI, boring missions, and horrible control. *Caveat emptor!*

GRAPHICS
■ Detailed environments, characters, glass reflections, and facial movements. Better than average.

0 1 2 3 5 — 4

SOUND
■ Good weapons sounds and satisfying groans from downed suspects.

0 1 2 5 — 4

MULTIPLAYER
■ Would have been a great addition to a good game, but you'll have to wait for a patch.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — X

PROS: Exciting gameplay; great AI; varied environments; the control you have over team members is unsurpassed.

CONS: No multiplayer support limits replayability; the lack of in-game saves is a chore at times.

OVERALL

SWAT 3 is a must-have for those looking for a little more depth in their first-person shooting games.

4 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

The Battle Looks Lost

CLOSE COMBAT IV: BATTLE OF THE BULGE Takes Gamers Nowhere They Haven't Been Before

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Mindscape** ■ DEVELOPER **Atomic Games** ■ GENRE **Strategy** ■ PLAYERS **1-2** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$39.99**

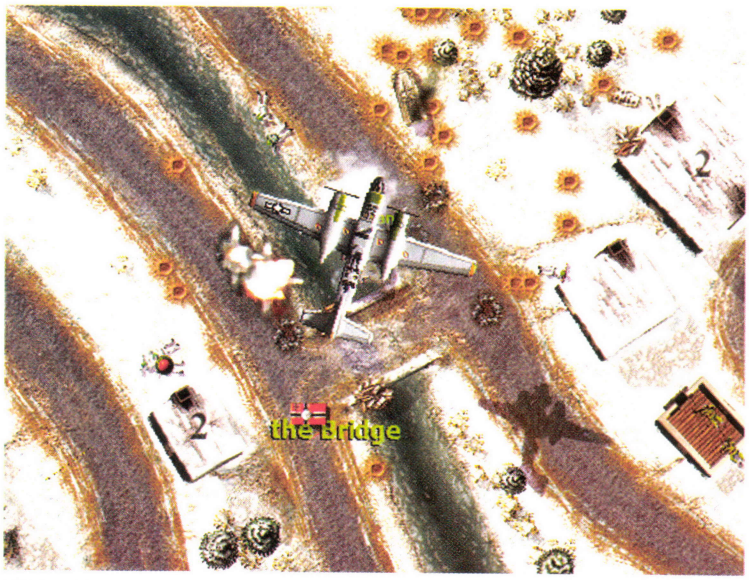
GAME GLANCE
- 3rd Battle of the Ardennes
- 5,000 Planes
- 200,000 Casualties
- 1,000,000+ Troops
- 50 Tedious Hours

Few things in life are more certain than death, taxes, and mediocre sequels. Continuing in this proud tradition of poor follow-ups, Mindscape brings this tedious affair to a desktop near you.

By Di Luo

Developed by Atomic Games, *Close Combat IV: Battle of the Bulge* is a squad-level, real-time war game featuring the Battle of the Ardennes. You move your little teams and tanks around the map, try to use the terrain to your advantage, and beat the crap out of your enemies.

You have control over artillery bombardments (a pitiful barrage of mortars) and, occasionally, air strikes, but neither is very effective and has minimal impact in campaign games. The new strategic model that allows you to move your battle groups around a map to seize or defend objectives is serviceable and better than the scripted missions of *Close Combat IV's* predecessors, but it gets bogged down with tedious battles, especially in the grand campaign.



BOMBS AWAY There are some action-filled moments in *Close Combat IV: Battle of the Bulge*, but the overall campaign makes *The Thin Red Line* look like an action movie.



DUG IN Get a buddy to play with you or risk becoming a casualty to the sandman.

Because the arrival of reinforcements is scripted, you are subjected to countless attacks on the same maps coming from the same direction. Playing as the Germans, it's too easy for you to hem in the computer counterattacks. Entrance points get so littered with armor wrecks that enemy units can't move.

The AI featured in the game is feeble, unable to use the terrain to its advantage, and is worthless on the attack. On the offensive, it will usually send its infantry forward over open ground to the slaughter, then have its armor drive about aimlessly.

The game's mildly entertaining against other humans or if you decide to play as the Germans on attack, but the similarity of battles and repetitiveness of play will quickly bore you. Play it in small doses and be sure to have a few shots of caffeine handy.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

■ MINIMUM SPEC	200MHz & 32MB
■ PREFERRED SPEC	266MHz & 64MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: INTEL PENTIUM, AMD K6-2

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

■ Software Rendering	✓
■ Direct3D	✗
■ 3dfx	✗
■ OpenGL	✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

■ EAX (SBLive!)	✗
■ Aureal 3D	✗

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

■ MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT

Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN 2, Internet 2

■ CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	Yes
■ MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	28.8k

The Verdict — Close Combat IV

HOW THEY COMPARE

■ **X-COM**
It's not in real-time, but it's still the best squad-level game out there.

■ **Antietam!**
It's got real-time action with the depth of turn-based games.

■ **Close Combat II**
It's enjoyable and much better than the original *Close Combat*.

■ **Close Combat IV**
When it comes down to it, this is just another rehash of the same old game.

■ **Close Combat III**
This is the absolute worst of the *Close Combat* series: Run, do not walk.

GRAPHICS
■ It's a good-looking game with pretty sprites to kill. It's no 3D-accelerated shooter, but it's not chopped liver, either.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 4

SOUND
■ Well done as usual. There's nothing more satisfying than the screams of anguish from your enemies.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 4

MULTIPLAYER
■ Unfortunately, you can still only play with one opponent, but the multiplayer game is fun nevertheless.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — 3

PROS: A few interesting new features, great graphics, and good sound; Enjoyable for fans of the series.

CONS: Many new features fall short, and the AI is about as competent as the French in 1940; Tedious campaigns.

OVERALL

Building on a solid engine, the game has its merits but it probably won't stay on your hard drive for long.

2 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆

The Bloodiest Day

SID MEIER'S ANTIETAM! Brings Gamers Close to the Bloodiest Battle in the American Civil War

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Firaxis** ■ DEVELOPER **Breakaway Games** ■ GENRE **Strategy** ■ PLAYERS **1-8** ■ ESRB RATING **Everyone** ■ PRICE **$29.99**

GAME GLANCE

- 6 Types of Artillery
- 1 Dozen Uniforms
- 24 Pre-made Scenarios
- Endless Random Battles
- 22,000 Casualties

Rejoice, ye *Gettysburg!* fanatics! *Sid Meier's Antietam!* arrives two years after the release of the original, recreating the same heart-pounding action.

By Di Luo

Unlike most war games, in which you can issue orders after hours of painstaking calculation and thought, *Antietam!* is in real-time. No, there isn't any resource gathering or base building—just regiments of men and batteries of cannons that you must order around the battlefield while you attempt to pound your opponent into the dirt.

Fast and furious, the pace of the game can get hectic in larger scenarios, but luckily for your sanity, it can be paused while you reconsider your situation.

Though *Antietam!* has few major changes from its predecessor, *Gettysburg!*, the folks at Breakaway Games managed to create a game that feels quite different. Except for the few crossings over the impassable Antietam Creek, there are far fewer dominating terrain features. You also have more powerful artillery and the ability to shoot into woods, so your attacks should prove more successful in *Antietam!* than they were in *Gettysburg!*

Also, it's impossible to control retreating troops, so battles have a more authentic feel than in the old game; now they degenerate into the battle-line slugfests that epitomized battles in the Civil War.

There's a downside in the game's similarity to *Gettysburg!*, however. The graphics are still 256-color sprites that look a bit cartoonish, especially the map, which seems less attractive now.

There is one minor improvement: distinct forms for some regiments, such as the Zouves, an addition that many *Gettysburg!* players clamored for.

The artificial intelligence in *Antietam!* is serviceable, and is better than that of many games in the genre. But it still pales in comparison to the imagination and excitement that a live opponent could bring. After a few battles, a player can easily exploit the computer's weaknesses. This type of gameplay problem kills replayability.

Antietam! is recommended to anyone with interest in the Civil War. Not available in stores, *Antietam!* can be purchased only directly from Firaxis at www.firaxis.com. Good luck, General!



A BRIDGE TOO FAR? Antietam was one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War, and the battles in the game are just as fierce. Run to the hills, Yanks!

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

MINIMUM SPEC	90MHz & 32MB
PREFERRED SPEC	166MHz & 32MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: **INTEL PENTIUM, CELERON, AND K6-2**

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

Software Rendering	✔
Direct3D	✘
3dfx	✘
OpenGL	✘

AUDIO SUPPORT

EAX (SBLive!)	✘
Aureal 3D	✘

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT	
Maximum number of players: Single PC 1, LAN 8, Internet 8	
CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	Yes
MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	28.8k

The Verdict — Sid Meier's Antietam!

HOW THEY COMPARE

- **Gettysburg!** The original was innovative and broke the mold of the genre.
- **Antietam!** Lots of little improvements over *Gettysburg!*, but nothing groundbreaking.
- **Close Combat** The first real-time war game, but on a much smaller scale.
- **Battleground 5** A turn-based game on Antietam. Good against humans, but the AI is bad.
- **Wargamer 1813** Not very fun due to the fact that the game's artificial intelligence is horrible.

GRAPHICS

■ The game features dated 256-color sprites, but at least they've got spiffy new uniforms.

0 1 2 4 5 — **3**

SOUND

■ No music, just the sounds of the battlefield. But what did you want, The Gettysburg Address?

0 1 2 4 5 — **3**

MULTIPLAYER

■ Five modes of play, up to eight players, and random scenarios. This is how multiplayer gaming should be done.

0 1 2 3 4 — **5**

PROS: Furious action, no waiting for your opponent's moves, lots of dead bodies, and great replayability.

CONS: AI not too challenging, uninspired graphics, available only at the Firaxis Web site (www.firaxis.com).

OVERALL

Still a great engine after two years, *Antietam!* is a worthy update to its father, *Gettysburg!*

4 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ★ ½

Slave to the Machine

SLAVE ZERO Is Fun for a Short While, but Then Leaves You Wanting More

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Infogrames** ■ DEVELOPER **Infogrames** ■ GENRE **Action** ■ PLAYERS **1** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$39.99**

GAME GLANCE

- 60-feet Tall Robots
- 1 Player Only
- 2 Hours of Fun Gameplay

The concept for Infogrames' *Slave Zero* is as compelling as can be: you and your pet robot—a biomechanical badass known as Slave Zero—are the rebellion's only hope against the SovKhan, an inimical dictator who reigns supreme over a massive 3D city.

By A.J. Schneier

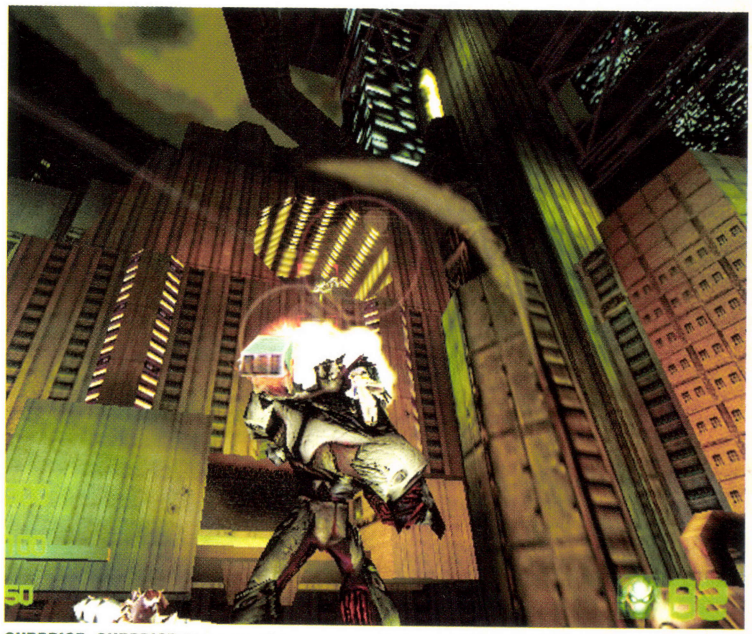
From the moment you take the helm of this awesome apparatus (in first- or third-person), you'll see that *Slave Zero* is the most fleet-footed, athletic 60-foot hunk of steel ever to be encountered in computer gaming. Each step it takes rattles the massive skyscrapers lining the streets of the city. Even the almighty Mechagodzilla would be jealous.

As you may have guessed, the action in *Slave Zero* always remains high. While terrorizing the teeming streets of Megacity S1-9—taking on sentinels, tanks, and various assault vehicles—your objectives are constantly being updated via intercom. This ensures that the gameplay remains focused, prevents players from getting lost, and keeps the barrels of your ballistic, energy, and missile launching weapons smoking.

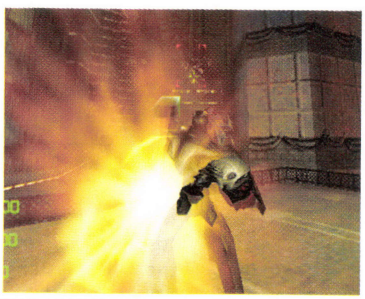
Unfortunately, the novelty value of running over screaming pedestrians and destroying miniature robots with low AI quotients quickly wears off. While *Slave Zero's* Ecstacy Engine renders environments that are pretty to look at, you can't explore them freely.

The real gap in *Slave Zero,* however, is the lack of multiplayer gameplay—battling with friends in agile metal giants would be fun.

If you're into living single, however, *Slave Zero* should enslave your attention for a few hours now and again.



SURPRISE, SURPRISE Slave sneaks up on some unsuspecting sentinels. "Hey guys. How's the weather down there?" (He just loves to tell that joke.)



HIGH BEAMS Hey! You want to turn down those headlights, pal? You're blinding me.

Tech Specs

PROCESSOR & MEMORY

■ MINIMUM SPEC	233MHz & 32MB
■ PREFERRED SPEC	266MHz & 64MB

CPU COMPATIBLE WITH: **INTEL PENTIUM**

GRAPHICS SUPPORT

■ Software Rendering	✓
■ Direct3D	✓
■ 3dfx	✓
■ OpenGL	✗

AUDIO SUPPORT

■ EAX (SBLive!)	✓
■ Aureal 3D	✗

MULTIPLAYER OPTIONS

■ MULTIPLAYER SUPPORT

Maximum number of players: PC 1, LAN N/A, Internet N/A

■ CD FOR EACH PLAYER?	N/A
■ MIN. INTERNET CONNECTION	N/A

The Verdict — Slave Zero

HOW THEY COMPARE

■ **MechWarrior 3**
The third game in the series that started it all combines strategy with intense action.

■ **Battlezone II**
Excellent multiplayer and single player game modes with a great 3D engine.

■ **Shogo**
Hot action and a decent plot; brought to you by the Lithtech 3D engine.

■ **Slave Zero**
Action packed, but a little too linear and devoid of a multiplayer component.

■ **Heavy Gear II**
Activision's second chapter proved to be a bit flat relative to the competition.

GRAPHICS

■ Great looking environments are fluid and teeming with life, but a bit bland by today's standards.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — **3**

SOUND

■ A techno soundtrack that accentuates the game nicely. You can't deny the impact of each step Slave Zero takes.

0 1 2 3 4 5 — **4**

MULTIPLAYER

■ Unfortunately, there is no multiplayer mode, which really hurts the longevity of this game

0 1 2 3 4 5 — **X**

PROS: *Slave Zero* plays much like an arcade game for adults. The action remains furious, and the impact of your 60-foot mech is undeniable.

CONS: Not the most robust of engines by today's standards.

OVERALL

While the single player game is fun, this game comes up a bit flat. Plus, we want multiplayer, dammit!

3 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

Missing in Action

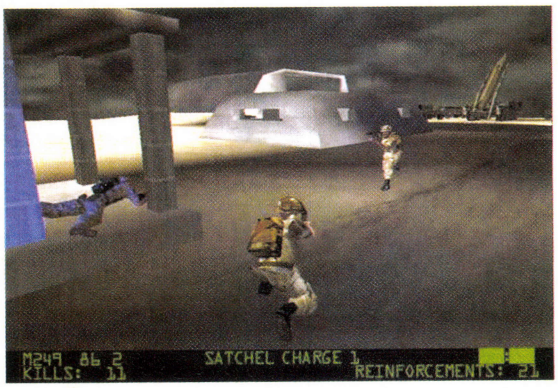
SPEC OPS II Can't Muster Up Enough Good Gameplay to Satisfy Combat Fans

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Ripcord Games** ■ DEVELOPER **Zombie Studios** ■ GENRE **Simulation** ■ PLAYERS **1-16** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$49.99**

GAME GLANCE
- 50+ Terrorists to Blow Away
- 1 Clumsy Interface
- 1 Bullet Kills Your Soldiers Dead

This poor man's *Rainbow Six* puts you in control of the Green Berets, the Army's special forces unit responsible for handling Uncle Sam's hairiest operations.

By Gary Eng Walk



FRIENDLY FIRE Spec Ops deserves a dishonorable discharge for too many flaws in its interface and artificial intelligence.

As luck would have it, there are more than a few problems here for you to solve in *Spec Ops II*, ranging from German terrorists plotting to boost a shipment of Stinger missiles to a defector needing a rescue from a heavily guarded compound in Communist North Korea.

At the beginning of each mission, you get to choose which soldiers to bring, as well as which guns, medical supplies, and accessories to carry.

Spec Ops II opted for realism, so all it takes is one or two well-placed shots for you to get fragged—frustrating because there's no continue feature in the game, forcing you to navigate its sloppy interface endlessly. We're all for making combat simulations as real as possible, but please, if we're going to die all of the time, at least make it easy to try the level again.

From the dated, *Deer Hunter*-drab graphics to the clumsy enemy AI (sometimes they'll just stop shooting and stare at you), *Spec Ops II* is in no danger of making the competition green with envy.

The Verdict

PROS: Realistic warfare gameplay, friendly forces' artificial intelligence; controls work reasonably well for the most part.

CONS: Very clumsy interface; no easy re-start option; graphics look dated; enemy artificial intelligence is pretty stupid.

OVERALL

The action is realistic, but the graphics, poor enemy artificial intelligence, and poor interface keep this game from meeting its goals.

2 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆

Holding Its Ground

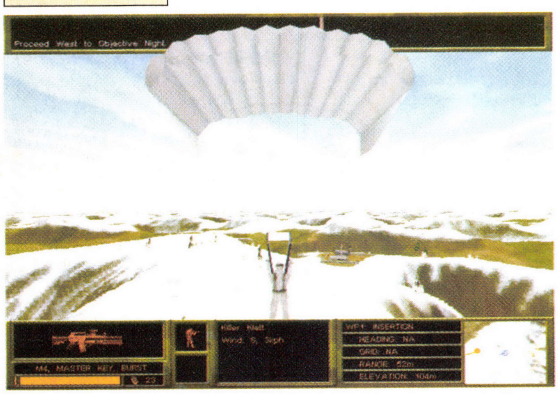
DELTA FORCE 2 Stays the Course and Ends Up Looking Just Like the Original Game

FACT FILE ■ PUBLISHER **Electronic Arts** ■ DEVELOPER **Novalogic** ■ GENRE **Action** ■ PLAYERS **1-50** ■ ESRB RATING **Teen** ■ PRICE **$39.99**

GAME GLANCE
- 1 Voxel-based Graphics Engine
- 40+ Missions to Play Through
- Free Online Play

The original *Delta Force* was a surprise hit for developer Novalogic. With the sequel, the company has decided to rest on its laurels and hope the public is still buying.

By Steve Klett



AERIAL ASSAULT The parachute-insertion missions lend excitement to *Delta Force 2*. Look out below!

Creeping through the new tall grass in *Delta Force 2*, I can't shake the voice of Elmer Fudd in my head saying, "I'm hunting wabbits." Only instead of "wabbits," I hear "voxels."

Because that's what *Delta Force 2* feels like at times—a great big voxel hunt. *Delta Force 2* uses voxel technology (basically 3D pixels) to create "more realistic" 3D environments, and it makes no appreciable use of 3D hardware.

The game now supports 32-bit graphics, but the on-screen action looks just as unimpressive as before. Terrain, vehicles, and enemy soldiers are all blocky chunks of voxels that are incredibly tough to make out at a distance.

If you have the patience to scan the screen looking for tiny specks that may be trees or may be enemy soldiers ready to kill you on sight, *Delta Force 2* does have something to offer. The game sports more than 40 missions and free online play, but unfortunately, while it can be fun at times, *Delta Force 2* doesn't offer much that's new.

The Verdict

PROS: More than 40 missions means lots of gameplay for your money; free online play for those who like a human challenge.

CONS: Voxel technology makes it hard to distinguish objects at a distance; blocky, pixellated graphics hamper gameplay.

OVERALL

Some of the action in *Delta Force 2* is fun, but the game's graphics really hold it back. That said, for the money, there is a lot of gameplay here.

3 OUT OF 5

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

FROM THE CREATORS OF DOOM

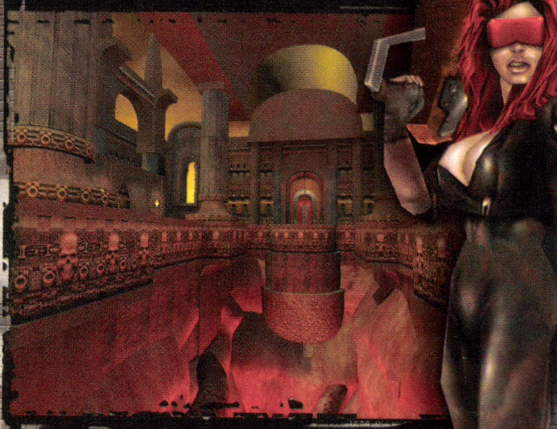
FASTER, SMARTER AND MORE INTENSE BATTLES THAN ANY GAME EVER. PERIOD.



"All hail the king of multiplayer 3D action" - Computer Games



"...Quake III will revolutionize the industry" - PC Magazine



"Will it be worth it? You bet your @#%!" - Computer Gaming World



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IN THE RIG

1. CPU: Pentium III/450MHz, www.intel.com, $190

2. RAM: 128MB, www.kingston.com, $155

3. Hard Drive: 9.1GB 7200RPM ULTRA 66, www.ibm.com, $110

4. Video Card: Matrox G400, www.matrox.com, $160

5. Sound Card: Diamond Monster Sound MX300 PCI, www.diamondmm.com, $35

6. CD-ROM: Kenwood 42x TRUEX CD-ROM, www.kenwood.com, $75

7. Speakers: Cambridge SoundWorks FourPoint Surround FPS2000 digital, www.soundblaster.com, $150

8. Monitor: LaCie electron22blue, www.lacie.com, $1,400

9. Modem: 3Com U.S. Robotics 56K Faxmodem, www.3com.com, $60

10. Keyboard: Microsoft Natural Keyboard Pro, www.microsoft.com, $55

11. Mouse: Microsoft IntelliMouse Explorer, www.microsoft.com, $75

12. ZIP Drive: Backup internal ZIP Drive, www.iomega.com, $95

13. Case: Generic ATX form factor case with 250 watts power supply, 7 expansion slots, $30

14. Motherboard: Asus P3B-F, www.asus.com, $130

Total cost: $2,720*

*prices calculated 11/22/1999 at www.pricewatch.com

The Thin Red Upgrade Line

Each month, we'll bring you the recipe for your very own monster machine. THIS MONTH | **Strategy Rig**



The more you can see, the greater the advantage. Since that requires setting your PC to a higher image resolution, you need a top of the line graphics card.

Listen up, men. War is hell, and I'm not gonna lie to you. Today, many of you will die... especially if you don't have a good computer to back up your flank.

At ease, solider. With a few upgrades, you'll be able to rally your troops like never before when you play real-time strategy (RTS) games.

The first and most important concern is your view of the battlefield. The more you can see, the greater the advantage. Since that requires setting your PC to a higher image resolution, you need a top of the line graphics card.

Traditionally, RTS games have only needed 2D graphics cards, but with the newest crop taking advantage of 3D hardware support, you should shoot for nothing but the best. Our pick here: Matrox Graphics G400.

To make that image really stand out, you need a solid display. We suggest LaCie's electron22blue 22-inch monitor. Its picture quality is far superior to many monitors currently available.

One of the other snags most common with RTS games is that the game grinds to a halt when you have too many units on-screen at once. You can solve this in one of two ways: change your tactics and opt for smaller commando raids, or beef up your system's RAM.

If you're trying to recreate the Normandy invasion, be prepared to buy more RAM. The price of RAM is a relative drop in the bucket considering the performance enhancements you get, so it's a no-brainer upgrade.

And speaking of no-brainers, you can still play most RTS games on machines in the Pentium 233MHz range—although we wouldn't recommend it. For solid performance, you should have, at the very least, a Pentium III/450MHz CPU.

The last major upgrade has already earned high marks in our review section: Microsoft's IntelliMouse Explorer. In most RTS games, you live and die by the speed of your mouse and hot-keys. The IntelliMouse Explorer features digital speed, precision, and a few extra programmable buttons.

Now you can make those tough, strategic decisions just a little faster. All you'll have to worry about is stockpiling resources and munitions. Good luck, soldiers.

—Darren Gladstone

General-ly SPEAKING

Here are some basic tips from strategy gamers:

- **Stop thinking so much.** Sometimes if you focus too much on a single unit's activities, you'll miss the bigger picture.
- **Don't paint yourself into a corner.** In many RTS games you can build walls. Use them to herd people where you want them to go, but don't rely on them too much. Back up walls with turret structures and missile launching troops.
- **Scout ahead.** Information is always half the battle. Send out your scout early and often.

In the WARCHEST

Hankering for combat? Here are some great strategy games to test-drive.

- ***Age of Empires II,*** Microsoft
- ***Myth II,*** Bungie
- ***StarCraft,*** Blizzard
- ***Dark Reign 2,*** Activision
- ***Total Annihilation: Kingdoms,*** Cavedog Entertainment

THE TOOLBOX

Having some problems with your game? Give these troubleshooting tips a try before you trash the game:

- **Have you checked for new hardware drivers or patches for the game?** Go to the game and video card manufacturers Web sites and see if any new drivers or patches are available.
- **Try changing your screen resolution to a lower setting.** Your computer may be struggling to animate too many on-screen characters at once.
- **Still have some slowdowns?** In the game's options menus you can always turn off visual effects. The game may not look as pretty, but at least it will work.
- **Try to install more of the game on your hard drive.** This always makes for faster gameplay.

PHOTO BY RAJAT GHOSH

PC Entertainment

TESTED | **Dimension XPS B700r**, Dell Computer, www.dell.com, $3,415

FACTFILE

- Pentium III 700MHz CPU
- 128MB RDRAM
- 20.4GB Hard Drive
- Microsoft Natural Keyboard Pro
- 32MB GeFORCE 256 3D card
- Harmon Kardon HK-595 speakers
- SoundBlaster Live! Value sound card
- 19-inch monitor
- MS Office 2000 Small Business Edition
- Diamond Multimedia Rio 500 MP3 player

Will the computer ever replace your rack system in the living room? Not likely soon, but it is slowly evolving to that point. And with Dell's newest Desktop entry, it appears to be taking its entertainment very seriously.

We had a chance to test drive Dell's Pentium III 700MHz Dimension XPS and we're happy to report that it's more than just another box that houses a CPU, graphics card, and a beefy hard drive. Dell is positioning it as a multimedia system by bundling a rich-sounding Harmon Kardon speaker set, an 8x DVD-ROM, and a crisp 19-inch monitor. But in an effort to show how plugged in the Texan computer company is, it's even bundling a Rio 500 MP3 player in the deal. So, now you can download MP3 files, digitize your own collection of CDs, as well as kick back and watch a flick or two in front of your new PC.

Oh, and did we forget to mention that the computer comes with a 32MB GeFORCE256 card for a serious 3D punch? To describe the card in action would be an injustice, so check out this month's *incite CD-ROM* for a technology demo. Even though no games are currently supporting the hardware transformation and lighting present in GeFORCE, new games and patches should start cropping up by the first half of 2000.

In tests, the computer performed very well with almost every game that we threw at it. We only ran into some snags with the Messiah demo, but that is attributed to the newness of the GeFORCE card and lack of proper driver support. We also discovered that after powering down and robooting again, the monitor remained off. We had to knock off a star for that. In all other situations, you can rest assured you will get some of the smoothest gaming that money can currently buy.

Multimedia aside, there is a bonus thrown in for good measure: The Microsoft Natural Keyboard Pro that we gave high marks to last month comes in the box. Now, it only comes down to the rather weighty pricetag. If you're starting from scratch and want to get not only into games but the Internet, MP3s, DVDs, and God knows what else, then this could be the one stop solution that you're looking for.

-Darren Gladstone

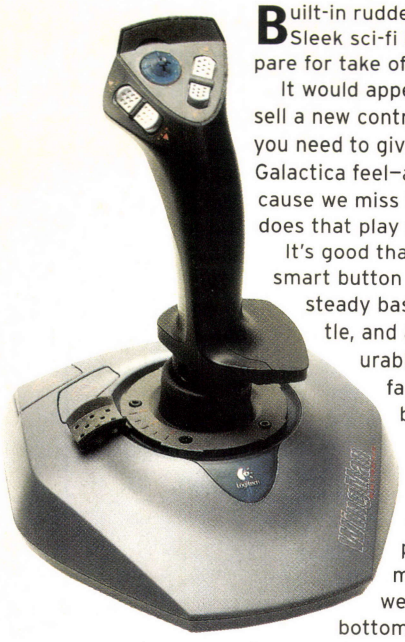
Overall ★★★★½



MULTIMEDIA MARVEL Dell's new PC doubles as your entertainment center.

Wingman Extreme 3D

TESTED | **Logitech**, www.logitech.com, $39.99



GET A GRIP No more "extreme" products..please.

Built-in rudder control? Check. Sleek sci-fi looks? Check. Prepare for take off.

It would appear that in order to sell a new controller these days, you need to give it that Battlestar Galactica feel—and we're happy because we miss the show. But how does that play out for a controller?

It's good that the stick has a smart button layout, a rock-steady base, a precise throttle, and an easily configurable software interface. Logitech has been at the joystick game for a while now and knows how to make a good controller. Compared to previous models, they've weighted down the bottom so that you now have a substantial piece of hardware in your hands.

On the software end there's intuitive key-mapping software and Microprose's *European Air War*.

Notice the funky clear plastic casing used for the hat switch and on the base? Kinda makes you feel like you're behind the controllers of a starfighter, eh? Well, it makes the stick look nice, but it feels a little too plastic. And that leads us to the only issue with the Wingman Extreme 3D, the feel of the stick itself.

The movement is passable and efficient. It works well enough, but it isn't as satisfying as the Cyborg3D Digital we looked at last month. In order to better immerse yourself, you need some feedback. Maybe a few extra springs for tension—anything to fool you into thinking that you're holding something other than a hunk of plastic polymers. But for forty bucks, it's still a good controller.

If you're in a bind for a basic controller, this is certainly a capable choice that will help you outgun the competition, but you can certainly do better.

-Darren Gladstone

Overall ★★★★½

Electron 22blue Monitor

TESTED | **LaCie**, www.lacie.com, $1,399

FEAST YOUR EYES ON THIS A sweet monitor with a sour price.



Avert your eyes. To look directly into the LaCie electron22blue monitor is to desire it. And with the hefty pricetag, you might be admiring this awesome 22" display from afar. It might seem like overkill for games, but once you've seen this dark blue monitor, you'll never want to look at another.

To say this monitor is big would be an understatement. Weighing in at a beefy 73 pounds, LaCie's electron22blue is based on Mitsubishi's "Natural Flat Aperture Grille Technology." What does that mean exactly? It has a 20-inch flat screen with zero geometrical distortion, vibrant color and crystal clear image quality. It also comes with a three-year warranty and a shade to keep glare away while you play.

Of course, when it comes to buying any monitor, it's important to see it for yourself. If you're ready to spend more on a new monitor than you did on your first car, the electron22blue is an excellent choice.

-Kevin da Luz

Overall ★★★★★

TESTED

AirKey Wireless Keyboard

Acer Peripherals, www.acerperipherals.com
$44.95

Feel tethered to your desk? Then it's time to cut the cord–literally–with Acer Peripherals' AirKey Wireless Keyboard.

It comes as no big surprise that there have been a plethora of wireless products on store shelves for the past few years. But with this wireless keyboard/mouse, lounging in gaming is now more of a reality than ever.

First, the unit is light and miniscule, roughly the size of a notebook computer's keypad. But the smartest inclusion is the mouse control placement. Under the right thumb is a gamepad-like control with the mouse buttons on the left side...granted, we would have preferred a more gamer-friendly set up (thumb control on left and buttons on the right), but it still worked fine when we started playing real-time strategy games.

The battery life and range for this infrared keyboard is also just as important.



IN THE AIR Put some distance between you and your computer.

We've been assured that it will run for three months on two AA batteries, but we'll let you know in two. And since it runs by line-of-sight, you can get too far away, but we were able to walk 15 feet away and still play without any lag. In short, our vision gave out before the range of the keyboard did. And frankly, why would need to be that far away from you computer to play a game anyhow?

Despite all this, we found ourselves appreciating the light, aerodynamic design as we hurled it at the computer in frustration at times. Games requiring mouse and keyboard control like first person shooters are simply impossible to play with this controller, but if you're into putting some space between you and *Age of Empires II*, *Baldur's Gate*, or *Ultima Acension*, then this could be a godsend.

-DG

Overall ★★☆☆☆

Gearheads

WE ANSWER YOUR TECH QUESTIONS | BY DARREN GLADSTONE

The Big Question of the Month

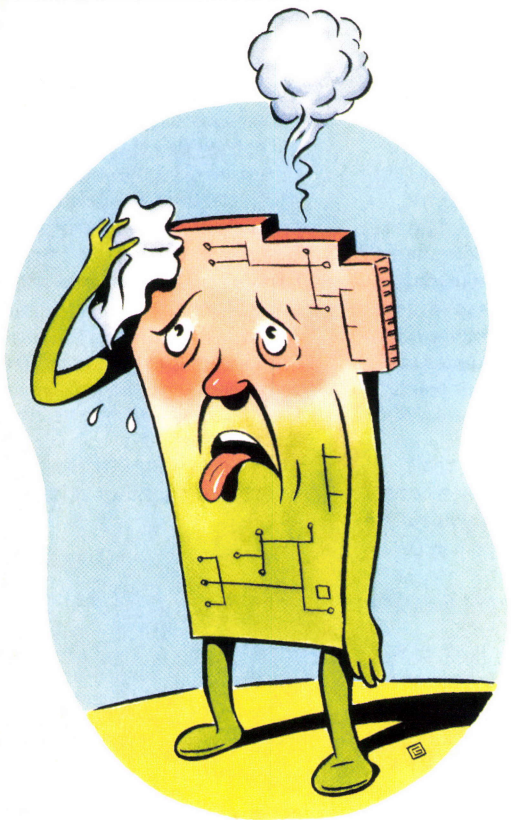


ILLUSTRATION BY A.J. GARCES

Hot and Bothered

Q. I've got a Voodoo3 2000 that overheats to the point of spontaneous combustion. Is there something I can do to stop the meltdown?

A. 3D video cards get *very* hot when you start blasting away at your favorite game. Go on, we dare you to touch that chip right after a heated deathmatch session—just don't expect to ever feel your fingers again.

Since 3D cards generate so much heat, they come equipped with heat sinks and even fans. There are a bunch of possible reasons for the mini-*China Syndrome* on your PC so let's take it one step at a time.

Is your computer getting enough ventilation? Here's a quick test: take the case off your PC and play a game. Does it still overheat? If not, you may just need to check the air vents for dust or just make sure that it is getting enough air. If not, try aiming a household fan at the PC with the case off. How about now? You may need to add an extra fan to your PC.

The other answer gets a bit tech-heavy. Your video card may not be receiving the right amount of voltage. This could be caused by faulty wiring on the motherboard, an aged power supply, or countless other issues. Leave these types of fixes to the professionals.

Go on, we dare you to touch that chip right after a heated deathmatch session.

Spinning Out of Control

Q. My 4x Sony CD-ROM is having a lot of problems reading CDs. Sometimes I have to re-insert the CD a couple of times. Is my drive defective?

A. Not necessarily. It sounds like you haven't been cleaning it, though. Just go to the local electronics store and pick up a CD head cleaner. It's a funky looking CD with tiny little brushes on one side. It'll only set you back $10 bucks and should clear up your problems.

Or you may have a burnt-out motor, a drive head out of alignment, or other problems. If that is the case, you may need to get a new CD-ROM. Don't panic: Spend something like $35 on a new 20x drive and your PC will be able to read information much more quickly.

Spend something like $35 on a new 20x drive and your PC will read information much more quickly.

We want you to badger us with any computer questions you can come up with. So start thinking up some good stumpers now. Send your questions to: incite PC Gaming, 650 Townsend St., Suite 305, San Francisco, CA 94103. Or email us at: gearheads@incitepcgaming.com.

OpenGL and DirectX

Q. I've been playing games that operate through DirectX, but I keep hearing about OpenGL. What is it exactly in relation to DirectX?

A. OpenGL, like DirectX, is an application programming interface (API) used for handling 3D operations within a program.

For example, the popular first-person action game *Quake II* uses OpenGL in its programming code. In order to appreciate the 3D acceleration programmed into the game, you'll need a 3D accelerator card that supports OpenGL.

OpenGL can be used instead of Direct3D, but it still can't replace the rest of DirectX, which is still used in Windows 95/98 for game controllers, audio support, and many other game and program compatibility functions.

OpenGL can be used instead of Direct3D, but it still can't replace the rest of DirectX.

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Archaeological Action

He's Saved the Ark of the Covenant and Rescued the Holy Grail. What's Next?

Indiana Jones is beginning his latest quest to stop the god Marduk from completing his Infernal Machine, an awsome weapon with the power to destroy the world.

This strategy guide will show you how to get the first part of the Infernal Machine.

BABYLON

The Pool Room

After you have seen the cut-scene where Dr. Volodnikov jumps across the arches and into the mountains on the right, shimmy along the left ledge in the flooded room and climb up into the highest alcove.

Jump across and hang from the ledge. Let go and grab again immediately to catch onto the lower ledge.

Climb up and dispatch the two poisonous spiders. Jump the pool again and go down the steps to deal with the third spider.

The Soviet Camp

Kill the five guards and head up the ladder and through the passageway. Shoot the guard and the scorpion in the tent.

The lever in the alcove will open the gate. Use the crate to get onto the wall and get the herbs from the rock ledge.

Cross the road and head up onto the far wall. From here jump onto the back of the truck to get through the checkpoint.

The Ruins of Babel

The three guards here are best dealt with through the window down to your left. They can't hit you there unless they come around the corner. You will have to rush the sniper.

Get up onto the sniper's gallery and collect the emerald, then head down the steps to the chasm. Use your whip to swing across, then climb up to the opening on your left. Kill the guard here and search the area to find the silver coins, then turn on the generator.

Kill the two guards and head through the open gate. Pull the crate towards you and crawl through the hole.

Time to Dive

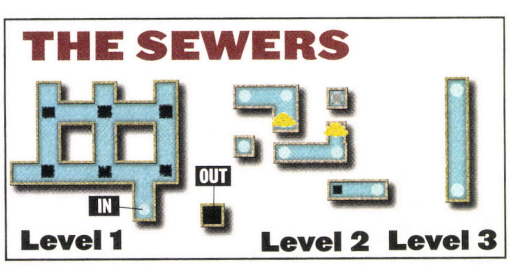
Swim through the tunnels and collect the silver bars and the gold coins, then take the deeper passage to get out.

After you meet Simon Turner, there are two more guards to kill at the top of the stairs. Unlock the door to the dynamite store and shoot the barrels from outside of the room.

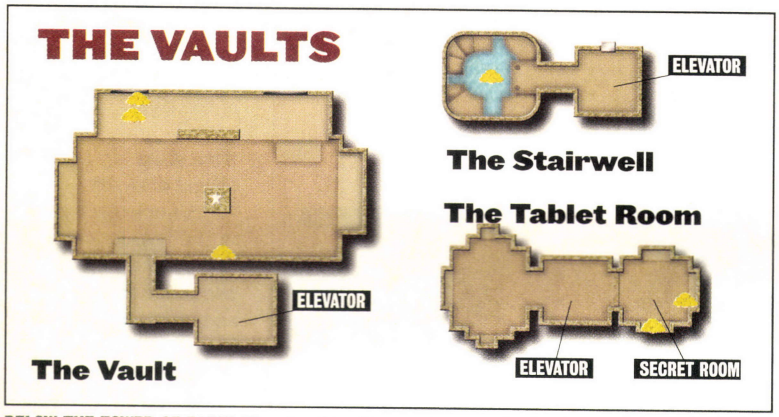
Jump down the hole and get the gold bar from the bottom of the pool. Go through the doorway and pull out the block to move the elevator.

The Vault

Fit Sophia's part into the gear mechanism and use the block on the elevator to reach the passageway. Kill all the bugs and use the opposite ledge to reach the first balcony and find the ruby. Drop



GETTING WET The water-filled tunnels aren't difficult to navigate. And there are plenty of breathing holes.



BELOW THE TOWER OF BABEL The elevator allows you access to the hidden vaults. Make sure that you don't miss any gold pieces along the way.

back down to the ledge and climb the ladder, going out to the right when you get the opportunity.

Climb onto the second balcony to get the silver idol and push the block through the hole.

Make your way back out to the ladder and climb to the top. Drop onto the block and jump up to the broken bridge.

Get the medium tablet, then jump across the bridge to get the large tablet.

At this point the bridge will give way, so drop down to the little ledge to your left and get the ruby from the alcove there.

Jump onto the star-marked platform in the center of the room to open the secret panel beneath the ledge. Get down to the floor and crawl through the secret tunnel to collect the statuette of Marduk that Simon wanted.

Climb up the debris to reach the only remaining opening in the chamber.

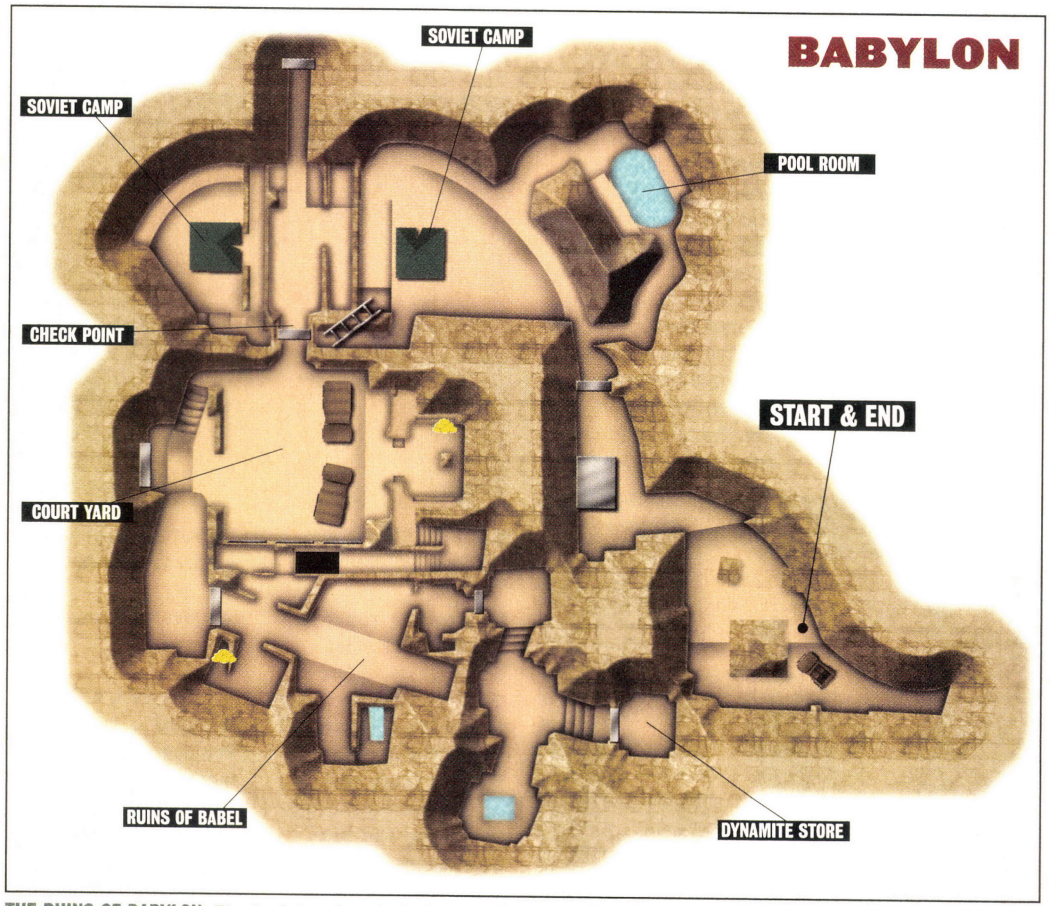
Crawl under the trap to get to the small tablet, then crawl out and return to the elevator shaft.

The Tablet Room

Put the three tablets into the marked alcove to activate the secret map. Now go to the secret room to get the diamond and the gold idol. Push the block into that room and press the button.

The elevator will now take you back to the surface, where you'll see your jeep, Simon, and your next destination.

INDIANA JONES continued on page 156 >>



THE RUINS OF BABYLON The Soviet archaeological expedition arrived long before Indy. Now he has to get past their guards to find the secrets of the Tower of Babel. You had better get moving.

FORTUNE & GLORY

DENOTES AN ITEM TREASURE ON MAPS

BABYLON TREASURES

EMERALD ($20)
In the alcove behind the sniper's gallery in the courtyard.

SILVER COINS ($40)
In the water closet from the rooms beyond the courtyard.

SILVER BAR ($70)
In the water-filled tunnels beneath the Russian operation.

GOLD COINS ($50)
Also in the water-filled tunnels.

GOLD BAR ($80)
At the bottom of the pool beneath the dynamite storage room.

RUBY ($10)
Next to a skeleton in a recess in the vault.

SILVER IDOL ($90)
In the recess on the balcony above the last treasure.

RUBY ($10)
In an alcove halfway up the vault wall.

DIAMOND ($30)
In the secret chamber opposite the map door.

GOLD IDOL ($100)
In the same chamber.

TOTAL RICHES AVAILABLE: $500

CHEAT CODES

The game also contains some toys to play with for the insistent hacker. Press [F10] during the game and enter one of these codes:

FRAMERATE
Displays frame rate. Limited entertainment here.

VERSION
Displays the version number. Handy if it's broken.

FIXME
Gets Indy out of any glitch he may get stuck in.

MAKEMEAPIRATE
Transforms Indy into Guybrush Threepwood of *Monkey Island* fame. Works well in the Palawan Lagoon.

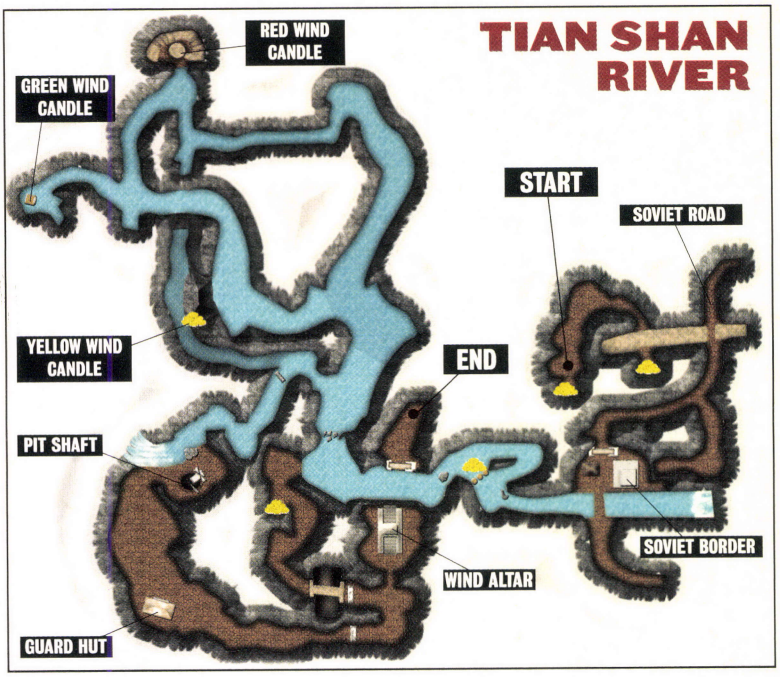
TALKIT_MARION
Turns god mode on.

URGON_ELSA
Gives all weapons.

AZERIM_SOPHIA
Gives all health items.

NUB_WILLIE
Gives free hints.

ENDCREDIT
Ends the game and rolls credits.



RIVER RAPIDS The Tian Shan river flows across the Soviet border. Indy will have to dodge the patrols and shoot the rapids. And then there's the Altar to the Four Winds....

» INDIANA JONES continued from page 155

The Heavenly Mountains

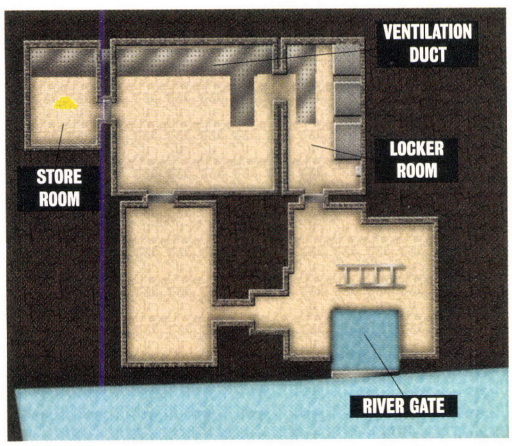
Behind you is a cave containing herbs and gold coins. Scare off the wolf by shooting at it, then cross the gorge to get the silver coins. Head down to the bridge and follow the road until you see an opening on your left. Go in and scare off the second wolf.

The Soviet Border

Snipe the guards, then jump onto the tower and climb down the ladders to the underground base. Shoot the guard and open the door to kill his companion.

Climb up into the ventilation ducts and head left. Drop down and get the money case before returning to the ductwork to reach the locker room.

Loot the lockers to get the raft and repair kit. Push the button next to the lockers and use the raft in the water. Paddle to the river.



THE SOVIET BORDER STATION The guard post is well defended but can be cleaned out with the help of Mr. Rifle.

The Tian Shan River

Follow the river to the waterfall on your left, then paddle into it to find the silver idol. Continue down the river to the snow ledge where you can get out. Follow the gully and find the silver coins behind the rock. Cross the bridge and turn right at the junction.

Kill the two guards by the hut and scare off the wolf. Search the lockers inside to stock up on raft repair kits, then follow the path to the pit shaft and more of the river.

The Red Wind Candle

Paddle down the river to the first junction and go left. At the second junction, go right and you will soon see a tower ahead of you.

Head over to it, climb up to the plateau, and shoot the tower window. Jump over there and pull the lever. Climb the steps and get the red candle.

The Yellow Wind Candle

Continue down the river until you see trees.

Land and search the big tree for the yellow candle. Behind the tree are some gold coins.

Complete the river journey to the big cave. Get the herbs then pull the lever and ascend in the elevator.



SHOOT THE RAPIDS White water fun, but watch out for treasures and mind those rocks. It is far too cold for a swim!

The Green Wind Candle

Replace any used raft repair kits and then get back into the water.

Go left again at the first junction and left at the second junction. Land at the jetty in front of the square building and go



PISTON BROKE Crossing the piston room will take careful timing and will probably become quite infuriating.

in to get the green candle. Shoot the two spiders and get back in your raft.

The Violet Wind Candle

Follow the river to the right, and at the first sign of buildings, take a right and go under the bridge.

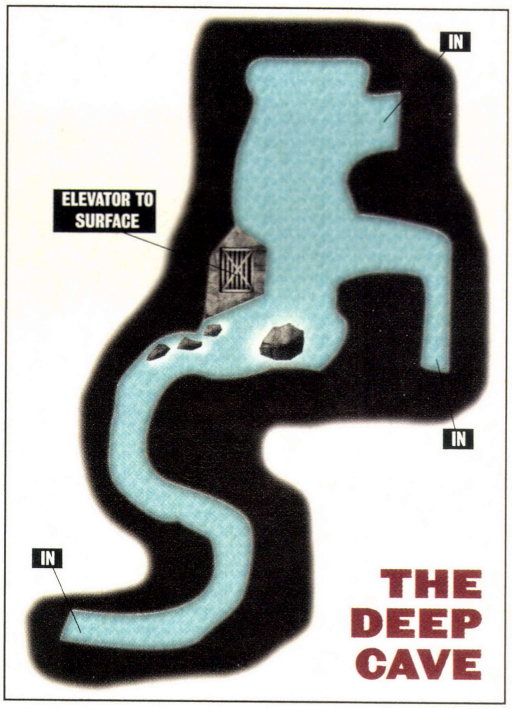
Head into the tunnel and up to the small cave on your left, before the bridge, that contains herbs and gold coins.

In the piston room, go right and jump onto the last piston at its lowest point. Turn around and jump for the balcony at its highest point.

Leap the gap in the balcony and onto the first piston. From here jump to the second piston and then to the opposite balcony. Cross the gap and get the gold idol and the trauma kit further around. Head back through the doorway.

Halfway up the stairs use your whip to pull yourself up to an alcove holding a silver bar. At the top of the stairs is the violet candle. Get back into the river, but as you paddle through the piston room go left and through the small opening to find a sapphire there.

Enter the cave with the elevator and ascend to the surface.



THE END OF THE RIDE This cavern brings together all of the river rapids. It is also home to the elevator to get back up.



THE PISTON ROOM This large structure is near the end of the rapids and you will have to paddle hard to get here. But once here expect to spend some time.

The Wind Altar

Head back up the gully to the pagoda and place the four candles around the wind altar then light them to extend the bridge. Cross and end the level.

The Entrance

Kill the spider and then jump up the two balconies and push the button. Climb the ladder onto the roof and cross the bridge.

Scare off the wolf and head for the far-left corner of the courtyard. Climb onto the roof and then onto

INDIANA JONES continued on page 158 »

FORTUNE & GLORY

TIAN SHAN RIVER TREASURES

GOLD COINS ($50)
Behind your starting position in a cave.

SILVER COINS ($40)
Over the gorge near the start.

MONEY CASE ($60)
In the storeroom of the Soviet guard post.

SILVER IDOL ($90)
Behind the waterfall halfway down the river.

SILVER COINS ($40)
Behind a rock after the first stretch of river rafting.

GOLD COINS ($50)
Behind the hollow tree where the yellow candle is found.

GOLD COINS ($50)
Cave near the stairs to the piston room bridge.

GOLD IDOL ($100)
In an alcove at the end of the piston room.

SILVER BAR ($70)
In a secret niche above the stairs to the violet candle.

SAPPHIRE ($30)
River side opening in the piston room.

TOTAL RICHES AVAILABLE: $580



Oriental mystique This pagoda houses the wind altar. Very Tranquil.

GENERAL TIPS

Your Arsenal
For these three levels of the game you will only have access to the 9mm automatic pistol, the machine pistol, and the combat rifle, in addition to your original .45 revolver, fists, and whip.

FISTS
Fists are not a lot of use, especially when you have infinite ammo in your .45, so don't bother with them.

WHIP
The whip is good if you just want to disarm an opponent but otherwise it is more useful for navigating the terrain than as a weapon.

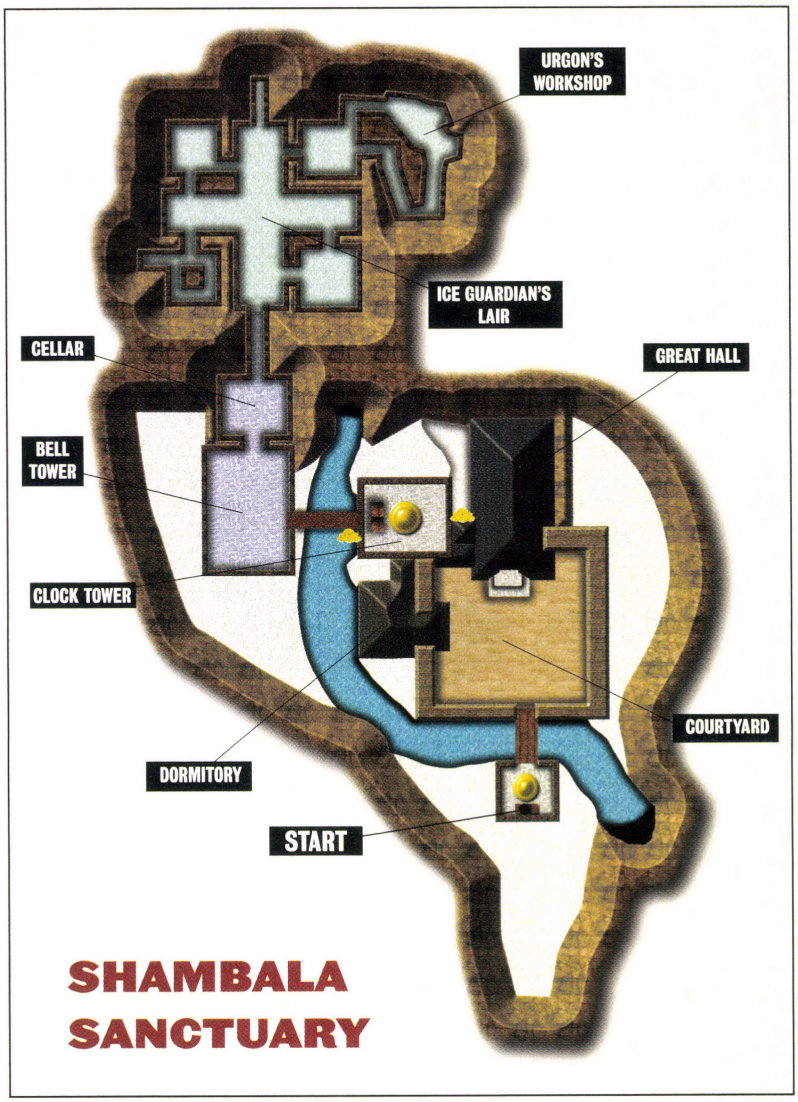
.45 REVOLVER
The .45-caliber revolver is fine for killing most opponents, especially those who can't fight back. If it can't hurt you, you may as well use something with infinite ammo.

9MM PISTOL
The 9mm automatic pistol is a more powerful version of your original gun. Fine in most situations but remember this one has limited ammo.

MACHINE PISTOL
The machine pistol is a much more rapid-fire weapon with a longer range. On the other hand, you don't find as much ammo for it. Use this for targets that are in the distance or if you are fighting a crowd.

COMBAT RIFLE
The combat rifle is great for long range sniping. It's also more powerful than any of the others and will fell most targets in one shot at point blank range. Again, not much ammo for it though.

MORE WEAPONS
Later on you will discover more weapons. Learn their specialities and use them wisely. For instance, the machete is only good in close combat, but is also the only weapon available underwater. It can also be used to break down light barriers like webbing or foliage.



SANCTUARY? NOT ANY MORE! The Shambala Sanctuary has suffered somewhat since its construction. Now it is full of skeletons and Icy Demons.

» INDIANA JONES continued from page 157

the wall. Hang off the edge of the wall, let go, and immediately grab it again to drop into a secret alcove containing a gold bar.

Now climb onto the bare brick wall and use it as a ladder. Navigate your way up the simple maze to the top of the clock tower, then go around the roof and step on the trapdoor.

The Clock Tower Basement
Drop down platform by platform until you reach the ground, then go to the north wall and drop down into the hole.

Disturb the Ice Demon and follow him into the gear room. Pull the gear block into place to complete the mechanism and then drop down the hole.

Hang from the ledge and drop down to get the herbs. Jump to the platform in the middle of the room, turn right, and take a running jump at the leftmost of the two shelves.

Snipe at the Ice Demon and then hang from the shelf to wake the second demon and snipe at him too.

Descend to the floor to wake and destroy the third demon.

Push the block to engage the waterwheel, then start up the left-hand series of shelves, using the whip when you can't get any further.

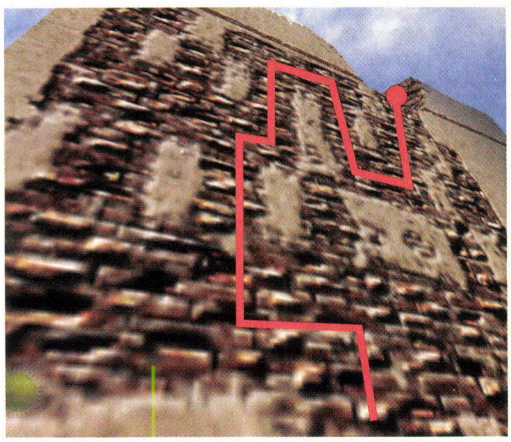
Jump out to the moving platform and change to the right-hand shelves. Climb to the top and out to the second moving platform. Jump to the left-hand shelf to get a diamond, then back onto the platform and out. Return to the clock room.

The Clock Tower
Push the button by the door to get out to the broken bridge.

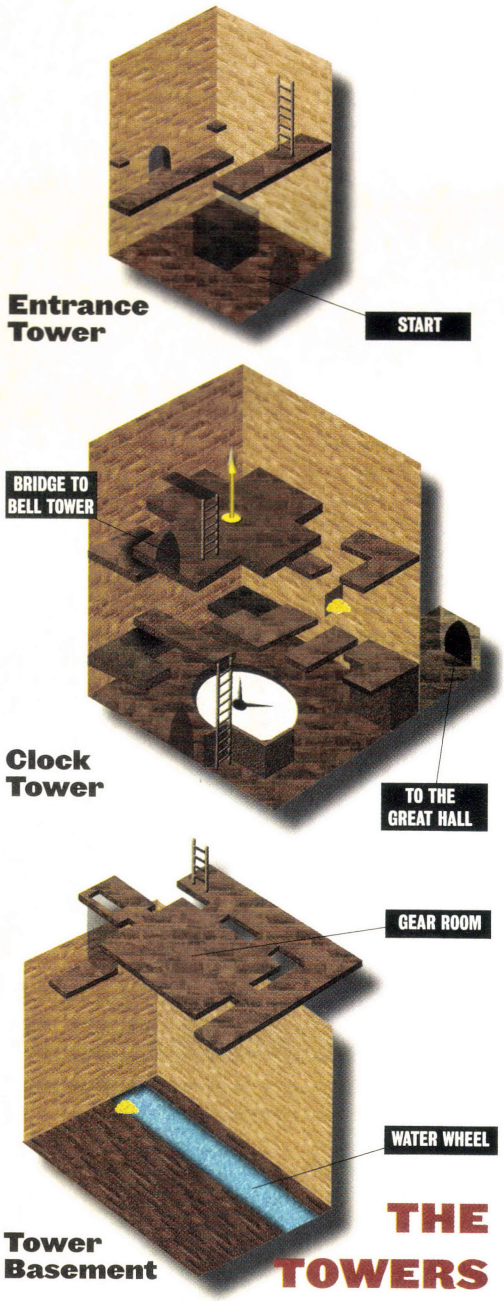
Drop down to the ledge below and get the emerald. Climb halfway up the tower and push the second button to extend the bridges and get the ruby. Pull the lever near the top of the tower to open the gates to the upper bridge, then cross to the bell tower.

The Bell Tower
From the bridge, drop down to the ledge below and shoot out the window. Go inside and shoot the Ice Demon.

Hang down beside the opening on the north side of the room to wake the second Ice



THE WALL MAZE The bare-brick wall can be scaled by Indy. Now all he has to do is get through the maze.

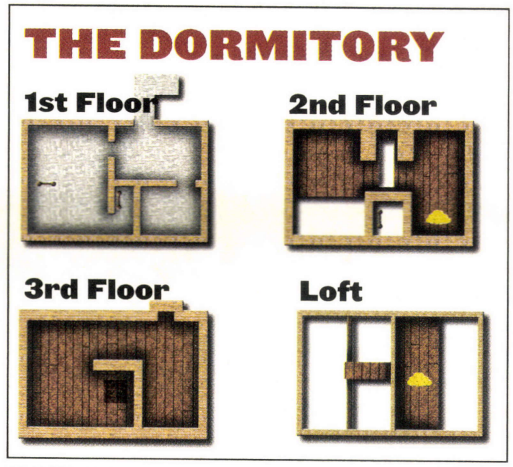


PLATFORM GAMES The Entrance and the Clock Tower provide plenty of ledges to scramble up and down.

Demon then snipe at it. Keep dropping down through the floors until you reach the ground. Pull the lever and then climb all the way to the top of the tower. Pull the lever here to raise the bell.

Descend to the ground again and get the gold bar. Now go back across the bridge to the clock tower and pull the final lever (beneath the bridge door). Hurry back to the bell tower and pull the lever there.

Return to the clock tower and head east through the ground-floor passageway and open the gate with the key you received. Now it's time to go into the great hall and destroy the Ice Demon.



NO TIME TO SLEEP The Dorm is a bit of a mess. But it is full of loot and holds the Monastic Seal to get into the treasury.

The Dormitory

Head down the passageway next to where you came in and kill the two Ice Demons. Climb the ladder to the mezzanine floor and push the button. Cross the bridge and get the herbs and gold coins.

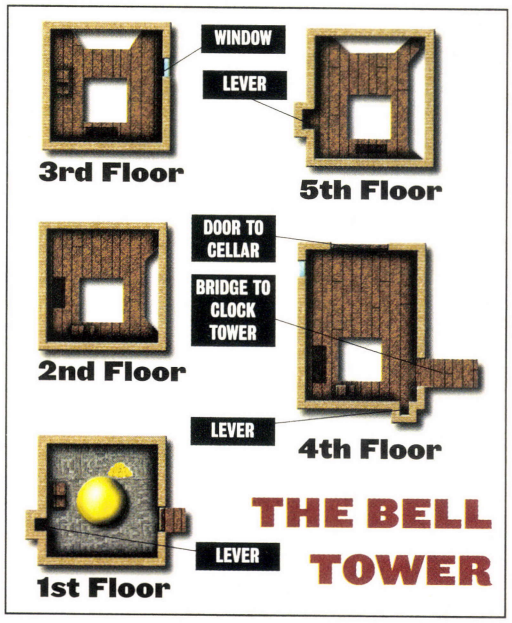
Return to the ground floor and climb the ladder in the alcove. Stand on the bed and jump for the rafter, then go through the crawl space and get the gold bar. Drop off the ledge and get the monastic seal. Go back to the ground floor and kill the three soldiers on the way to the great hall.

Trap Bonanza

Jump up to the statue and turn it counterclockwise twice, then drop down and go through the gateway that just opened.

Grab the silver idol and run away fast. Drop down the pit and kill the spider before

INDIANA JONES continued on page 160 >>



HOME OF THE HOLY WOMAN If Indy can get the bell to the top and then ring it, he can summon the Holy Woman. Yay!

GENERAL TIPS

LOOK AROUND

Indy lives in a 3D environment and a lot of the stuff will go straight over his head. Make sure to look up every now and again or you will miss lots of opportunities.

It is also a good idea to check behind everything. A lot of the treasures are hidden behind lumps of scenery. Watch out for green herbs on green terrain–camouflage is used to hide things.

MISCELLANEOUS EQUIPMENT

From time to time Indy will come across a piece of hardware that goes straight into his items list.

Such things include spades, wind candles, torpedo arming devices, and the like. Think logically about what these could be for and keep your eyes open for an application. So, if you see something strange on the ground, use the spade to dig it up. Usually Indy will give you some clue when he encounters an area where something can be used.

As a general rule: If it's broken, then fix it; if it's fixed, then break it. That's karma for you.

SHOOTING THINGS

Most critters are easier to kill when they can't hurt you. Often you will find a nearby ledge or crate to stand on where you can happily snipe at them without any risk. Sharks can be shot with the .45 from the shoreline, for example. Obviously this doesn't work if they have ranged weapons, as do soldiers and Ice Demons.

It is also a good idea not to go around shooting everything in sight. There are often explosive things hidden around corners and in dark recesses. Hit those and you'll know about it.

GENERAL TIPS

TRAPS

Usually if there is a trap or other potential pitfall ahead Indy will make some kind of comment or other wary noise to give you a hint. Listen out for these or you could get hurt.

Traps that have actually been set are usually triggered by stepping on floor tiles with strange mosaics, or by picking up an item while standing on such a tile, so keep your eyes open as well as your ears.

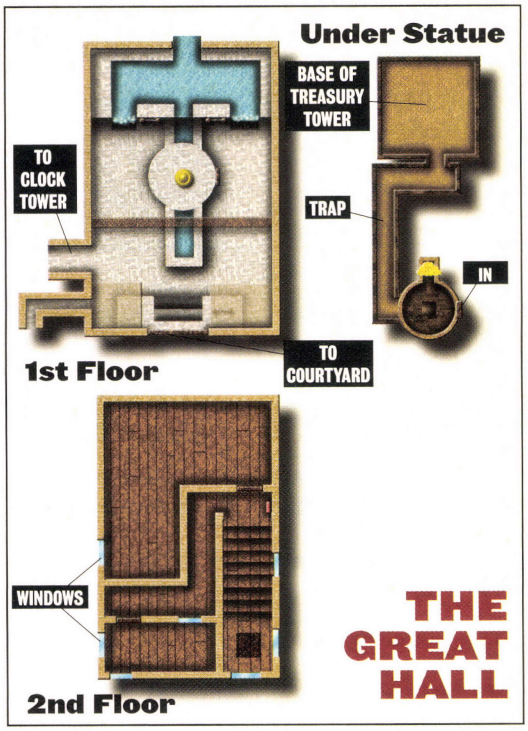
WHIPPING

Your whip is your most versatile tool. Not just a weapon, it will also allow you to climb and swing all over the scenery. If you find yourself stuck with no way forward, then try drawing out the whip and wandering about.

If Indy sees something he can snag with it he will glance in that direction. I bet Lara Croft wishes she had a whip. Other than the one in her closet, that is.

WATER

Whenever you see water, check it out to see if you can go diving in it. Note: this is not a good plan in the freezing mountains of Kazakhstan! A lot of the time there are secret tunnels or other goodies hidden beneath the waves.



HALLS OF POWER A central point with a lovely water feature. Don't leave through the front doors or you'll be locked out!

» INDIANA JONES continued from page 159

walking to the edge of the marked tiles and crawling the rest of the way to the corner. Kill the two Ice Demons in the next room.

Climb the ladder and use the whip to swing across to the opposite passage. There use the whip to grab the gold idol. Go up in the elevator and use the monastic seal to access the treasury.

The Treasury

Hang from the shelf and shimmy to your left. Drop down and jump two beams out into the room. Climb onto the upright, jump back towards the entrance, and then head for the hand space above the door.

Shimmy to the right and drop onto the platform. Now jump for the beam and drop from the far side onto the lower beam.

Turn about to drop off the side nearest the door and make your way to the wall. Use the whip to swing across to the other side of the room and head across the beams to the big gap where you can use the whip again.

Climb onto the upright ledge, jump across the room, and clamber up the supports. Push the moveable block further into the wall to reveal the silver bar, then pull the block all the way out and climb onto it. Turn around and leap for the upright ledge, and then onto the balcony.

From here, jump to the opposite beam and head into the passageway. Shoot the spider and get the metal key. Head back out and quickly traverse the loose beam to your left before it collapses. Now repeat your steps to get back to the balcony.

Use the metal key to open the gate and get the plant bulb. Turn and shoot the soldier before dropping into the water to return to the great hall.

The Great Hall

Climb the ladder near the front door and jump out to the beam.

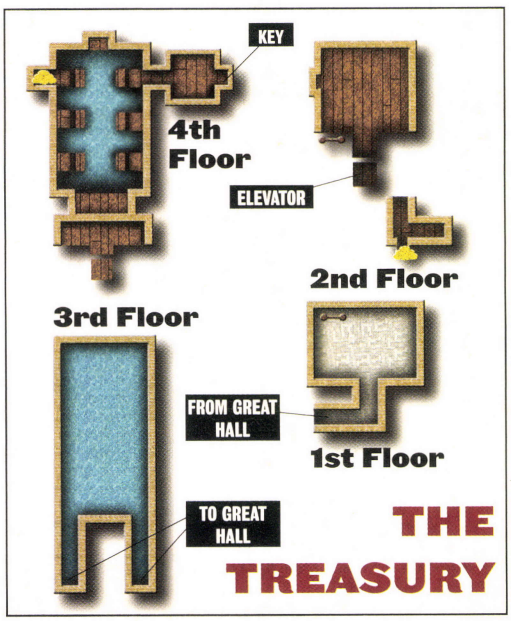
Go along the beam and back onto the second balcony. Push the button, return to the ladder and climb up then head up the stairs and around to the grilled window. Shoot the window to your right through the grille. Return to the top of the stairs and push the button. Kill the Ice Demon, then break the window and shoot the soldier.

Hang from the ledge and shimmy along to your right until you can climb up through the window. Get the herbs and put the plant bulb into the holder.

Go back to the great hall and onto the beam. Use the whip on the plant holder's support to swing over to the platform beneath the window. Now get the



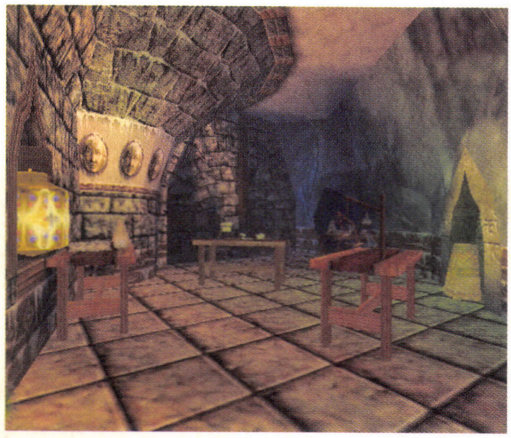
WATER FEATURE Lovely water to feed your budding plant once you recover it. But where do the monks eat?



SAFE BREAKER There are traps galore, and then a whole series of tricky jumps. Not as easy as using dynamite.



THE ICE GUARDIAN Ah! Isn't he cute? Not really. He is also immune to bullets, which sucks for you.



URGON'S WORKSHOP Resting place of the machine part and Urgon himself. Also, a hiding place from the Ice Guardian.

budding plant. Head back to the bell tower, killing all the soldiers as you go, and give the holy woman the plant. After her transformation, she will allow you access to the cellars.

The Ice Guardian

Run around the building on your left and go inside. Follow the passage and then climb the ledge to the top.

Pull the block on your right so that it obstructs the ledge you came up and use the slide behind you. Head back outside and go across the open space into the building diagonally opposite.

Jump up onto the shelf to your right and follow the path around to the bridge. Go across and straight through the next room to reach the broken bridge.

Jump the gap then race through the next room and over the next bridge. In this last room you will have to jump up the platforms until you reach the top of the wall, then use the whip to swing across to the first room again. One last leap should get you to the door. Press the button and enter.

Get Urgon's part and slide back down into the fray. Now you can use Urgon's part to attack the Ice Guardian.

Once the Ice Guardian is dead, search the rooms for the herbs before using Urgon's part again on the fractured ice block. Head down the revealed passageway to end the level.



BAD DOG! Wolves bite, but will run away from gunfire. So you don't have to shoot this endangered species.

DEALING WITH THE ICE GUARDIAN

The guardian of Urgon's part is conveniently invulnerable to all mortal weapons. This makes stopping it a little bit tricky. But there is a way; get Urgon's part itself and then use its power to shatter the very ice that makes this beast. Unfortunately using the part takes a lot out of Indy, so you should take a break between assaults.

On the other hand, the Guardian's attacks aren't too dangerous, so it is possible to ignore it for a while as long as you have some health kits handy.



GIVE US A HUG The Ice Guardian does not enjoy being whacked by the wierd powers of Urgon's Part.

Endangered Species

Unlike Lara Croft, Indy is much more concerned about some of the endangered species. Of course, snakes and other poisonous critters don't fall into this category, even if they are endangered. Indy hates snakes.

You Did It!

Congratulations! You have acquired Urgon's part of the Infernal Machine. Three more parts and you are ready to deal with Marduk himself. Good luck!

FORTUNE & GLORY

SHAMBALA SANCTUARY TREASURES

GOLD BAR ($80)
Across the courtyard, over the roof and down the other side.

DIAMOND ($30)
In the river basement, at the top of the left-hand series of shelves.

EMERALD ($20)
Beneath the doorway from the clock tower.

RUBY ($10)
Alcove halfway up the clock tower (need to extend the bridges)

GOLD BAR ($80)
Underneath the bell's original position on the ground floor of the bell tower.

GOLD COINS ($50)
In the study of the dormitory block.

GOLD BAR ($80)
On top of a rafter in the dormitory block.

SILVER IDOL ($90)
In the room underneath the statue in the great hall. [trapped]

GOLD IDOL ($100)
In the passage opposite the elevator to the treasury. [trapped]

SILVER BAR ($70)
Behind a moveable block in the left wall of the treasury.

TOTAL RICHES AVAILABLE: $610

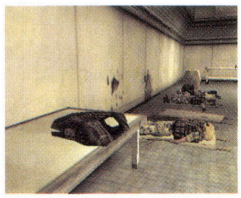
Eat This!

Half Life: Opposing Force Beating You Down? We'll Help You to Victory

Half-life was, without question, the best single-player, first-person shooter on the PC. How can anyone possibly follow that up? By creating *Half Life: Opposing Force*, that's how.

Instead of controlling Gordon Freeman, as you did in the original game, in *Opposing Force* you take on the role of Corporal Adrian Shepard, one of the special forces soldiers sent to silence the Black Mesa facility.

In this comprehensive guide, we'll give you pointers and tips for the first six missions to help you get through the easier areas of the game.



DEATH ROW Here is your power suit. Use it well.

We've also provided you with a complete walk-through of the final five levels, including tips on defeating the final boss.

So let's get to the action and clean up this mess, soldier!

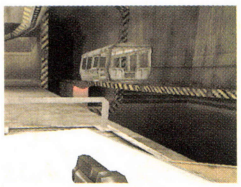
Area 1: Welcome to Black Mesa

Your first task is to grab the power suit. This is found in the makeshift mortuary not far from where the game commences.

Once you've got the power suit you can head off to the lower section of the complex. The security guard will let you into the next section where you'll find your first weapon—the wrench.

Use the wrench to smash the circular mirror that is reflecting the laser light across the stairway.

After the first outside section, you'll find a dead soldier and a knife. Pick the knife up: it's the best hand-to-hand weapon.



RAIL TICKET Leap across to the carriage.

To get past the helicopter, you must first switch off the power. The switch is in a compound beyond the underground bunker. You'll also find the Desert Eagle weapon here.

Once you're underground, you'll find the shotgun and some shells. This weapon is excellent at close range.

When you reach a room that is being destroyed by an electrical surge, wait for the gangway to come crashing down and use it to escape.

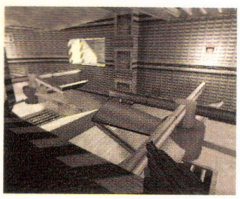
To get across the large section of toxic



ELECTRIC CHARGE Power down the generator or quickly become acquainted with 100,000 soldier-cooking Volts.

waste you must use the moveable platform as a stepping stone. You'll find the control lever in the room overlooking the spillage.

Watch out for the barnacle's tentacles when you are moving through the sewer network.



A DEADLY FAN! Avoid the blades at all cost!

You must blow up the explosive boxes that are trapping the robot in the room full of toxic waste. This will enable you to climb down and drain the room using the control console.

When you reach the monorail carriage, use the nearby trolley to provide you with the extra distance you need to leap into it.

Area 2: We're Pulling Out

Once you've met up with the security guard who's trying to steal candy, get him to follow you. He can open the security door for some ammo and health. To save ammunition, let him take out the aliens in the stairwell ahead.

Shoot out the glass in the room opposite the security closet and get the scientist to heal you.

Once you've used the lift to access the higher section, kill the three aliens and then grab the machine gun. You must use the ventilation grating that is above the power suit computer to get out of this room.

Once you've spoken to the guy using the radio, head over to the soldier interrogating the scientist, use the ventilation shaft to sneak by, grab the power suit cells, and then go down the steps.

Area 3: Missing in Action

You will come to an area with a loose floor. Continually jump while crossing and you should make it across without falling through.

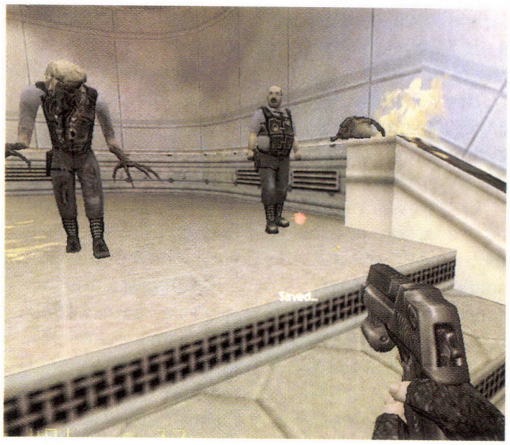
When you are moving past the rotating fans, be careful, as they will kill you instantly.

You must now get past a number of fire blasts. Leap across as the fires die but don't hang around or you'll get caught in the follow-up blast.

When you reach the explosive barrel, place it in the line of the test blast, then push the button. This will cause an explosion that creates a hole, which you should drop into.



BOSS MAN This your commanding officer. Try to ignore the fact that he seems to be staring at a desk for no reason.



SECURE HELP The fat, bald security guard will take out all the aliens in this area, saving you ammo and health.



MEDICAL HELP The medical officer goes to work.

When you reach the elevator, use the ladders to climb down to the bottom, turn off the power, then climb back to the top and use the cable wire to access the higher level.

As you reach the top you will see a lift car, in which you will find two power suit cells.

Use the metal box that you find in the next section to climb up through the air duct, and then make your way to the explosive crate. You need to detonate this crate so you can push the box through the hole in the wall. This will enable you to access the next air duct.

Drop down into the concealed section where you'll find a scientist. Turn off the power and use the wires above to climb up into the next room.

Use the radio to contact your platoon members. Once they've blown the door, get the engineer to use his blow-torch to open the door leading to the elevator.

Area 4: Friendly Fire

When the lift stops, enter the next room. After you take out another group of aliens, use the engineer to knock down the door at the back of the room to access a few extra items.

When you enter the next area, shoot the crates so they explode and kill the aliens, then shoot the power points on the wall to deactivate the electricity. Now use the power

OPPOSING FORCE continued on page 164 >>



SWITCH GATE This switch opens up the rail network.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

WRENCH/COMBAT KNIFE

The wrench and combat knife may be the most basic weapons in the game, but they certainly have value. If you need to smash open some wooden boxes or knock away an air-duct grating, using these weapons will save you ammunition and do the job much more quickly.

PISTOL

The pistol is much like the standard 9mm handgun from *Half-Life*. It isn't particularly powerful, which makes it useless against the bigger creatures in the game, but it will take out those pesky head crabs with a couple well-placed shots.

DESERT EAGLE

The desert eagle is much more powerful than the standard handgun and with the laser sight it provides a deadly and accurate means of attack.

MACHINE GUN

The machine gun is one of the most versatile weapons in the game. With its rapid-firing mechanism, 50 rounds per clip, and a grenade launcher mounted underneath, it's a real killing machine!

TIP! SAVE YOUR AMMO

Ammunition is not limitless in *Opposing Force*, and for this reason you can't get trigger-happy and waste clip after clip. This is particularly true at the start of the game, as you'll only have a couple of weapons and minimal ammo. Don't waste a bullet to kill the head crabs. Rather, avoid their attack then get in close with the knife or wrench.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

SHOTGUN

Use the shotgun at close range to take out weaker aliens in a single shot. If you need more firepower, use the double-blast by pressing the secondary-fire button. However, you can only load eight shells into the shotgun at a time, so make sure you keep an eye on your ammunition level.

ROCKET LAUNCHER

Because of its wide damage radius, the rocket launcher should only be used on distant targets. When used correctly, this weapon can take down the toughest opponents in a single shot.

GRENADES

Grenades are great for flushing out enemy soldiers hiding behind sandbag walls. Tap the attack button and the pin will be removed; now release the button to throw the grenade. Using this tactic, you can make the grenade explode in mid-air if so desired.

TIP! LATERAL THINKING

As in most first-person shooters, strafing from left to right is absolutely essential in *Opposing Force*. When you move around a corner, use the strafe technique to move sideways while turning to face the way you are going. This will give you a tactical advantage over an enemy lurking around the corner and will often save your life.

» **OPPOSING FORCE** continued from page 163

lines to swing across the gap.

Use the antenna to climb up out of the complex and into a small compound area.

Go through the air duct and take out the platoon of black ops soldiers in the next room. Smash the nearby boxes and then open up the room in the far corner. Here you'll find a wounded engineer. Get the medic and have him heal the wounded soldier.

Now head back to the small compound and get the engineer to knock down the door.

A laser gun is positioned behind the door. Let your soldiers take care of it.

The next area is a large but simple section that requires you to take out three platoons of black ops soldiers. Use your back-up to take them out.

With these Black Ops out of the way you can flip the switch to open up the door of the rail network.

This enables you to drop down and use the train to make your way through the underground network.

Once you are off the rail carriage, use the metal box to leap up onto the pipe and get yourself up onto the section above. Watch out for the live wire dangling down as you jump through.

Area 5: We Are Not Alone

This area starts with you watching Gordon Freeman leaping through a teleport gate. As soon as this happens, run around to the other side of the room and wait for the gangway above to come crashing down. This enables you to find a second teleporter.

Welcome to the alien world, soldier.

Leap between the platforms until you reach an orange light. This is a gate that will take you back to the black Mesa Complex.

As you are making your way across the platforms, a dead scientist and a new weapon will appear in front of you. This is the displacer, which will prove very useful as you progress through the game. Use the alien trampolines to reach the warp and exit the alien stage.

Area 6: Crush Depth

Push the button on the console and the scientist will teleport back into the room from his hiding place in the underwater tank. He can open up the doors in the complex for you.

As you approach the second door, climb up the ladder and go through the air duct. Once you are in the next area, you'll have to operate the teleport cubical.

Follow the tunnel that leads out of the water and climb up the ladder. Head along this passageway using the health and suit power computers to recharge.



LOOK OUT BELOW At the top of the elevator shaft, you'll have to leap down to the level below.

Activate the wheel to open the gate, as this will release the mutant fish and allow you to get through to the next section.

To get past the electric field in the corridor, shoot the control panel at the end of the hall and the power will go out.

The next alien you encounter is a new breed. Kill him and grab a new weapon, the shock rifle. This weapon is actually alive and will attack when its host is dead. You have been warned!

Go through the next set of teleporters and you'll find yourself in an underwater section.



ELECTRIC HALL To bypass this electric field, shoot the control panel at the end of the hall and it's lights out!

Avoid the two huge mutant fish and head for the pipe that leads up out of the water.

Area 7: Vicarious Reality

As this level starts, you'll have to take out three head crabs before following a corridor to a dead end.

Turn around and three aliens will have appeared. Take them out and jump through the smashed window.

In this area you must kill the huge voltigore alien or quickly dash over to the exit door.

Smash the glass of the elevator door and climb the ladder to the top. Here you'll have to drop down to the level below and use the door that lies on the ground as your landing pad.

Follow the corridor forward, then turn left twice and take the elevator to the level below. Here you'll find a medical computer that will provide you with a nice health boost.

Collect the nearby barnacle and you'll now find yourself equipped with a handy grappling hook.

Smash the glass and drop down into the specimen area below (it looks like a section

of the alien world). Dispatch the houndeyes and go through the door and up the short elevator. There you'll find a fish-like creature on the floor, which is actually a weapon, the spore launcher. Grab it and head down the corridor.

Go past the first door and kill the alien that waits around the next corner. You should now continue to follow the passageway past the "Observation Area" signs until you reach another metal door.

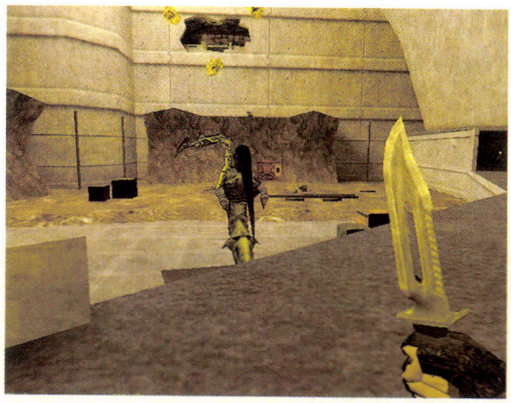
Go through the metal door and then down the metal staircase. Be ready with the shotgun as three houndeyes will attack you at the bottom.

In the next area, you should push the button to watch the holographic message from the head scientist.

When this has finished, the door at the far end of the room will open, and you'll need to kill the three Pit Drones that lurk just beyond it.

Use the grappling hook to get across the gap and go through the door on your right.

You are now in a darkened room that is full of barnacles, plus three head crabs on the floor. Quickly kill the head crabs and the barnacles using the shock rifle.



TENTACLE TROUBLE These huge tentacles cannot be killed, so stay low and be quiet—they won't be able to hear you!

From here, go up the next lift and then kill the three aliens that wait in the next room. Now head down towards the large metal doors at the end of the corridor ahead.

Beyond these doors is an elevator that leads to a storage room. Pick up the health and ammo for the displacer. Once you've grabbed all the pick-ups, head back down to the floor below and go up the short staircase and through the metal door. You will now find yourself in a huge room with two massive tentacles growing out of the ground. At this point, you should drop down into the lower section of the room and smash all the boxes that litter the ground, as these yield more items.

Be careful as you move around; crouch down to minimize the sounds you make since the tentacles react to sound.

Shooting the tentacles with the shock rifle will send them retreating underground for a few seconds. Use this time to collect nearby items.

Use the grappling hook to reach the hole in the north wall. Inside is a shaft that leads you to an air duct. Make your way along the air duct until you arrive at a small room.

Drop down and operate the switch. This will power down the fan in the grating above. Climb the ladder and knock away the grating so you can crawl through the air duct and into the next area.



PIT MONSTER This huge parasite is blocking the remote bridge, so you must flush him out with the toxic waste!

Area 8: Pit Worms Nest

You start this level knee deep in sewage. Quickly make your way through the door in front of you.

Kill the alien that lurks behind the door and then go through the door marked "Waste Station 01" and climb the ladder. Your task in this level is to kill the giant pit monster, but it can't be done with your current arsenal.

Go through the door marked "Waste Station 03," climb the ladder, and kill the three acid-spitting aliens. Now push the switch marked "Steam vent" and head back to the main chamber.

On the lowest level of the walkway in the main chamber, you'll find a door marked "Waste Station 02." Go through here and down the ladder.

Kill another pair of the acid-spitting aliens before leaping your way over the boxes in the trash compactor.

In the next room you'll need to take out the three barnacles that are suspended from the ceiling and also leap over the puddles of acid.



MERCY FLUSH Whoosh! Goodbye turd monsters!

Climb the stairs, killing two more acid-spitting aliens as you go. Find the main switch for the trash compactor and activate it. This will crush all the boxes and reveal a hidden grating.

Grab the pick-ups, then smash through the grating and drop down into the water below. From here, smash the glass and follow the passageway until you come to the "Emergency Override"

OPPOSING FORCE continued on page 166 »

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

SATCHEL CHARGE

The satchel charges are extremely powerful, and the fact that you can place them, then detonate them from a safe distance makes them excellent for setting traps.

TRIP MINES

Trip mines are devious little devices that pack one hell of a punch! Set the mine on a wall and a laser beam will shoot across to the nearest solid object. When the beam is broken, the mine explodes. Use this weapon for covering your back or blocking off sections of corridor.

MINIGUN

The minigun is easily the fastest-firing weapon in the game and its sheer power will throw you back when you fire it. However, the clip only holds 50 bullets, which the gun will eat up in no time. This, combined with a long re-load time, makes it a weapon that should be used strategically. Crouch for more accurate targeting.

TIP! BOOT CAMP

Before you start the game, take the time to complete the training missions that the boot camp option provides. While techniques like firing your weapon and swimming underwater may be a little mundane to an experienced *Half-Life* player, there are some new skills covered. For example, the climbing and leaping between ropes is completley new and takes some getting used to.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

DISPLACER
The displacer is a weapon that holds the key to completing *Opposing Force*. The secondary-fire button will teleport you to the alien world, giving you the ability to access seemingly impassable areas of the game. For this reason don't waste the ammo; only use it when told to do so in the walk-through.

SNIPER RIFLE
Sniper rifles are always fun, and *Opposing Force's* rifle is no different. The high-velocity rounds this baby fires, along with its scope's zooming capabilities, provide for a very satisfying one-shot, one-kill ratio. Just watch out for the long reload time!

SHOCK RIFLE
The shock rifle fires an electrical impulse that is very effective against all targets. In addition, this weapon will also power itself back up, giving you an unlimited supply of ammo.

SPORE LAUNCHER
The spore launcher is a fish-like creature that spits balls of acid that explode upon impact. Essentially an alien grenade launcher, it is great for taking out enemies around corners.

SNARK
Snarks are little alien bugs that can be released by hand. They crawl around attacking everything in sight. They'll attack you, too, if no enemy is in range, so be careful when using these critters.



GRAPPLE TIME! Use the grappling hook to reach this higher area. Or you could just jump in place for hours. It's up to you.

» **OPPOSING FORCE** continued from page 165

for the gearbox. Push this button and the water in the area will begin to rise. You will now be able to float back to the hole in the bottom of the trash compactor and get back to the main chamber.

Once you are back in the pit-monster's lair, head back to the metal door marked "Waste Station 01" and climb the ladder to the very top section. To the left side of the room you'll see a platform with a console marked "Pressure Valve," but the ladder leading to it has been smashed away. Use the grappling hook to reach the pressure valve, then climb up and activate it.

Finally, head to the main control console in the middle level of the chamber and press the "Flush Toxic Waste" button to kill the beast.

Area 9: Foxtrot Uniform

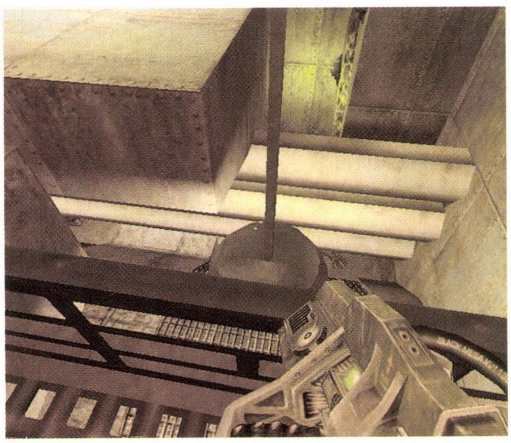
Head down the metal gangway and leap over the water.

Now turn right and go through the door. Kill the pit drones and then use the grappling hook to attach and swing from the alien life forms on the wall opposite to reach the other side.

From here you should climb the nearby ladder that leads to the surface.

As you emerge from the manhole, a military troop-transport truck will drive up in the background carrying four black-ops soldiers that you must kill. Once they are dead, grab the minigun and ammo from the metal cargo container and then smash the boxes to reveal a couple of medical packs.

Climb up through the metal cargo containers to the left. Here you'll have to take out three more enemy soldiers before dropping down into a small section that has more boxes of items for you to collect.



HIGH ABOVE Use high vantage points to ambush your enemies. They'll never look up here!

Head over to the far right corner of the compound and enter the sentry tower.

Climb the ladder and you'll find the sniper rifle, an excellent weapon for the battle that lies ahead.

Next, go to the far left corner of the main compound, where you'll find a small alley that leads to the next section of the complex.



TROUBLE AHEAD Black ops soldiers lurk up ahead. Thanks to *incite PC Gaming*, you've got the drop on 'em.

Go to the far end of this compound and crawl through the small passageway that leads through to a storage room and your surviving platoon members.

Grab the health, ammo, and power suit cells before rounding up your men and heading out into the next courtyard.

As you go through the door, kill the soldier that is in the sentry tower on the right. Now slowly make your way into the middle of the courtyard, taking out all enemies. You should let your team member do most of the fighting as this will save energy and ammunition.Be very careful in this area as there are explosives and laser bombs everywhere. One stray bullet and you are toast!

Once again, take out the black-ops soldiers with the help of your platoon members.

Go to the far end of the courtyard and through the huge doors that lead into the underground bunker.

Once inside, slowly walk up to the next set of doors and enter the room beyond. You'll see a firefight between some black-ops soldiers and two aliens. Let them duke it out and take out the now-weakened aliens.

Next, jump down from the truck and head over to the opposite side of the room where you'll find a

ladder leading down into a cave complex.

The passageways ahead are inhabited by some of the toughest creatures in the game. Save your game before you go any further!

The thing that makes this underground section so tough isn't the complexity of the caves. Rather, it's the four huge voltigores that call these dark caves their home. Use your surroundings to your advantage. Select a rapid firing weapon (minigun or machine gun) and shoot one voltigore at a time. Fire off a volley of shots then hide behind a corner.

Quickly retreat down the passageway, firing at the creature as you go. If you use this tactic for each alien in turn, you should get through this battle with around 90 percent of your health intact.

With all four beasts out of the way, follow the passageway until you reach a set of piles of rocks. Crawl under these and turn right.

You must now take out another one of the aliens before you can exit into a passageway filled with water. Turn right and swim toward the ladder.



SHUT THAT DOOR! Pull the lever and the door will close to stop the constant stream of rude aliens.

Now head into the next cave network. You'll have to take out three more of the voltigores. However, this time things are much easier. Walk into the cave with your night-vision goggles on and fire off a couple of shots at the first creature you come across.

Immediately backpedal down the passageway until you are standing at the mouth of the cave. The creature will follow you this far, but will be unable to actually leave the cave, allowing you to hide around the corner and pick him off with any weapon you choose.

Repeat this for all three and the job is done. You can now make your way through the caves with no fear.

All that remains are relatively weak infant creatures, which can be killed with a few shotgun shells. At the far end of the cave network, you'll find a ladder. Climb this and you'll meet up with three more of your platoon members.

Use the medical officer to restore your health, if you need it.

Grab your sniper rifle and slowly edge through the doorway into a room where three more aliens are waiting in the compound ahead.

Snipe them, but stay alert, as the gunfire will draw the attention of a voltigore that will soon close in on your position.

You should back up into the building and wait for the monster to approach the doorway. His huge size prevents him from getting through the doorway, making him cannon fodder.

Now head out into the main section of the compound and bear to the right. Go through the metal cargo container and grab your sniper rifle. Position yourself behind the metal boxes to the left. You can now pick off the other aliens from relative safety. With this done, follow the alleyway into the next section of the storage facility, being sure to grab the medical supplies and satchel charge as you go.



UP TO FREEDOM At the end of the cave section you'll meet up with some more friendly soldiers.

As you enter the next section of the compound, be ready with the machine gun; an alien is hiding behind the first corner.

This area contains two more shock troopers and a voltigore, so save your game before you confront them.

With the compound clear, head over to the right-hand side and through a door marked

OPPOSING FORCE continued on page 168 »



MONSTER MASH These voltigores can take huge amounts of punishment. Too bad Aunt Wilma's breath isn't a weapon.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

EVASIVE TACTICS

Head crabs may be small, but when they attack in a group they can cause you problems. The trick is to move in toward them, then side step as they lunge for you. Now dash over and quickly use the knife to kill them, one by one.

THE OLD SWITCHEROO

As a general rule, the human weapons tend to be more effective against the alien creatures, and vice-versa.

SAVE, SAVE, SAVE!

The key to *Half-Life Opposing Force*, as with any other first-person shooter, is to save your game at regular intervals. Once you've done a tricky section do a quicksave: You never know what danger lurks behind the next corner!

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

POWER EXTREME

Your power suit has built-in night vision goggles that are very useful. If, at any time, you are having problems seeing what lies ahead, use the goggles, as usually there will be an enemy waiting.

DEAD MAN'S CLICK

Always keep your weapons fully loaded with ammo. If you find yourself in a quiet corridor or room, take the time to go through the guns and reload each one.

WELL-TRODDEN PATHS

At the start of each area, save the game. If you accidentally perform a quick-save later in the level and then realize you've made a mistake, you will have a back-up plan. It sure beats going back to the previous area and playing through the whole thing again.

USE YOUR BACKUPS

Whenever you meet up with some friendly soldiers, always have them accompany you on the next stage of your mission. This is also the case with the security guards you meet inside the complex.

These guys may constantly jabber away, but they provide an excellent source of backup. You can stay at the back of the group and let your buddies do the killing and take all the damage.

Most soldiers carry a machine gun and sometimes a minigun, which means they'll mow down the opposition in no time. Even the humble security guard carries a Desert Eagle that is easily capable of taking down even a large alien in a single well-placed shot.



HELPING HANDS These guys will help you through the next cargo compound, so let them do the work and save ammo!

» OPPOSING FORCE continued from page 167

"Restricted Access."

You are now at a dam. Ignore the huge alien that is chained to the dam for now and use the grappling hook to get to the other side. Kill the two aliens that warp in, and then press the detonator to explode the giant alien. This will expose a pipe in the center, which you should use to access the next area.

Area 10: The Package

When you exit the pipe, wade through the marsh and make contact with two more friendly soldiers. As you enter the next section of marsh, you should use the sniper rifle to take out the soldier that is waiting for you.

Repeat this process for another soldier that uses a machine gun. From here go straight ahead and through the next section of marsh.

You must kill two more black-ops soldiers. Remember to use your team members to do the fighting when possible.

You'll now arrive at a large compound containing a large building at the far end which is the research facility.

Run over to the far right corner of this area and use the sniper rifle to take out the soldier who is attacking you with the grenade launcher.

Go through the door, which is next to the sign that reads "Ordnance building." Once inside, kill the soldier and then use the radio to get vital intelligence information.

With this done, it's time to head back out into the compound. Another pair of enemy soldiers will attack you here, so use a couple of sniper rifle shots to put them down.

Now head over to the raised platform where the grenade launcher is positioned. At ground level, you will find a entrance into the building.

Enter the building and go up the metal stairway using the machine gun to take down the soldier who blocks your path.

At the top of the staircase, you can go either right or left. To the right is a room full of boxes that yield loads of ammunition and health.

To the right you'll find a door that leads to the grenade launcher, which you should use to fire grenades over at the fenced-off section of the ordnance building. This should do the trick.

One direct hit will smash the fence to pieces.Use the grenade launcher to kill the three aliens before dropping down to ground level and heading over to the now-accessible section of the base.

Now enter the small compound that is guarded by three aliens and a military gunship hovering above. Take down the three aliens with the gun of your choice, then use the rocket launcher and bring the gunship down to earth—in pieces.

Go through the building to the right, head up the stairs, and drop down into the next section.

You'll see a long power cable stretched between the buildings on either side of you, but the power is on so you cannot get across.

Go to the far end of the complex and climb the ladder. Now dash across the roof and drop down into the fenced-off section.

Hit the power switch and head back to the rooftops and across to the opposite building, where you'll find a grating that leads to an underground parking lot.

Once inside the building, you should climb up the metal boxes and jump into the gap between the pipes on the far wall.

Here you'll have to kill one pit drone and two shock troopers. Use the Desert Eagle to take each alien down with two shots. Now follow the road down to the lower level of the lot.

As you turn the corner, be ready with a loaded rocket launcher as another voltigore is just ahead.

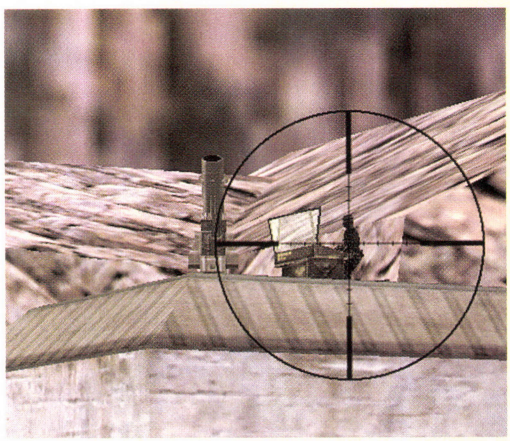
Quickly change to your sniper rifle and pick off the remaining two aliens that lurk at the back of this section.

Change to the shotgun and slowly make your way into the center of the parking area where two black-ops soldiers will leap down from the air ducts above. A double shotgun blast for each is enough to send them to an early grave!



SURPRISE ATTACK Watch out for the attacking aliens.

In the far corner of this area you'll find a jeep parked under an open air grating. Jump



SNEAKY SNIPER This enemy soldier sits high above the main compound firing grenades. Snipe his ass from long range.



BOMBS AWAY Now that you finally have control of the grenade launcher you can blow up the fence to your left.

up onto the vehicle and then climb into the air duct, where you'll meet a security guard and find a power suit cell.

Follow the air duct until you can once again drop down into the parking lot.

As you emerge from the confines of the duct, be ready to take down two more aliens. In the distance you will see a closed glass door, behind which a security guard is hiding. Go through the fence gates to the left and kill the two black-ops soldiers standing by the bomb.

Turn off the bomb and then head back to the security guard who will now let you in. Grab all the health and ammo in this room and use the elevator to access the final area.

Area 11: Worlds Collide

You'll find yourself in a huge warehouse. This area is also full of black-ops soldiers.

Take on the machine gunner with the sniper rifle, then jump onto the conveyer belt and turn right. Make your way along the conveyor belt. In the next section, you must take out two more black-ops soldiers before using the elevator to gain access to the next section. Use the boxes here to climb up and access a small passageway that leads to a large room.

If you carefully look over the edge into the room below, you'll see three aliens and three enemy soldiers squaring off. Wait for the six of them to fight it out.

Use the sniper rifle to pick off anyone who has survived the firefight. Get across to the metal container in the middle of the room, being careful not to fall off along the way.

Crouch down and get ready for another battle below. When the battle has died down pick off any remaining life forms and drop down onto the floor and smash the three boxes directly below the huge air vent on the wall to your left.

Grab the health and head over to the far left-hand corner of this room as quickly as you can. When the door opens, a security guard will be waiting for you.

The guard tells you that something huge is lurking in the chamber below and it must be stopped. Is this the cause of the alien presence in the facility?

Restore your health and power suit energy, grab all the ammo in the room, and use the elevator to access the final section of the game. Now would be a good time to save your game.

Once the elevator has stopped, make your way down the corridor that lies ahead and head through the metal door. You are now in the final room. Good luck.

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

WATCH YOUR STEP

When you're on a ledge, take extra care when you move. Corporal Shepard can only fall a short distance before he takes damage on impact, and falling too far will result in instant death. Use the "walk" key to slow down your rate of movement in sections like this and you'll diminish the chance of falling to your death. The same care should be taken when climbing ladders or ropes: One false move and you will plummet to your death. For this reason, always do a quick save whenever the terrain gets tricky.

THE ART OF SNIPING

Once you get the sniper rifle (Area 9: Foxtrot Uniform) it will quickly become one of your favorite weapons. The main factor that makes this weapon so good is the power of its shots; you can take out an enemy from a long distance with a single shot. Use the zoom lens to focus on your prey and always aim for the head, as this provides the best chance of an instant kill. On the down side, this weapon has the longest reload time of any weapon in the game. The key is to never to use it in close-quarters fighting.

WATCH YOUR BACK

When you enter a large room or head down a new corridor, always take a quick glance behind you, as you never know what lurks there. Larger rooms usually provide lots of cover for hidden assassins, so checking if anyone is behind you will stop a sneaky attacker from getting the jump on you.

HOW TO WIN THE FINAL BATTLE

Sure, she's only one big, ugly monster, but don't think she's going to give up easily. You'll need to use some mad skills if you want to drive this creature back through the portal and win the game.

Once the slug-like boss monster has arrived through the portal, quickly dash around and use one of the laser guns to attack one of her eyes. When you score a hit, his eye will close. When this happens, run over to the other laser and do the same to her other eye. Now she is completely blind, and therefore vulnerable.

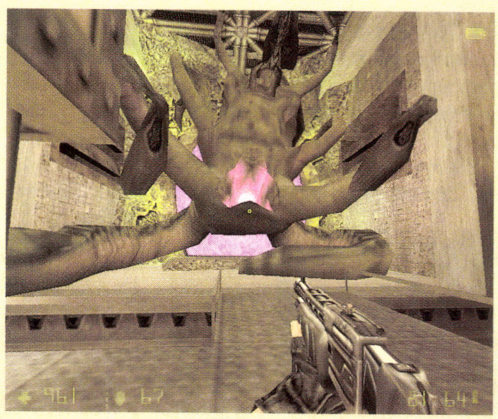
Quickly drop down to the platform below where you will see that a section of her stomach has opened up. Quickly blast her waiting belly with the shotgun. At this point, reinforcements will be teleported into the arena.

Repeat the process of using the laser guns to blind the creature before dropping down and attacking her exposed stomach.

As you hurt the giant alien, she will begin to smash away sections of the gangway, making it harder to get across to the far laser gun. Use the grappling hook to get across the gap where the bridge once was.

You can now use the laser gun to continue the attack. It only takes four double-shotgun blasts to the stomach to force the massive creature back through the portal.

Congratulations, you've made it!



TAKE THAT, ALIEN SCUM With the creature's weak spot exposed, grab the shotgun and blast it good.

Theme Mayhem

Welcome to the World of *SimThemePark*—Our Guide Will Help You Keep All Your Visitors Happy and Keep You Building World-class Theme Parks

The first thing any park needs is pathways. Without these your visitors and staff will get nowhere.

It helps to build paths in loops without leaving any dead-ends. This way the visitors can explore around your park without ever having to double back on themselves, which will keep them happier.



ENTER HERE This is where your adventure will begin.

No one wants to walk past things they've already seen.

When placing your rides, it helps to build them with the entrance towards the front of the park, or facing the exit of another ride.

Exits on the other side force visitors deeper into your park (whether they like it or not). This is a good mechanism to move them towards your bigger rides without annoying them.

You may find it to your advantage to have more than one ride exiting into the same area. This way you can easily have a single janitor on hand to deal with the waves of vomit that will surely be created.



CONVENIENT CONVENIENCES Somewhere for them to run when it all gets too much.

These areas also provide a good place for shops and souvenir stands to fleece visitors for as much cash as possible while still keeping them happy. You might want to consider putting a block of bathrooms nearby, as well.

Your major attractions are large and require careful positioning. Long paths should lead up to the entrance and away from the exit. If you line these routes with sideshows and shops then it will make the walk much more pleasant for your visitors and they will love you for it.

Bathrooms and Scenery

Now that you have some attractions, you will need some other facilities to make life in your theme park bearable.

The first necessity is bathrooms. These are best built in blocks, so if one is occupied then visitors can use the others. Bathrooms will get messy quickly so it is often worthwhile to dedicate a janitor to the bathroom block by limiting his patrol area to just the bathrooms and the immediate area outside of them.



EARLY DAYS Even the greatest theme parks will come from the humblest of beginnings.

Bathrooms are not pleasant things to have but are definitely needed. To keep them out of sight until they are needed, it helps to conceal them around corners and behind screens of bushes and trees.

The plant life will also absorb those disturbing odors and make everyone's life a bit more bearable.

Themed scenery, speakers, and the like may seem to be a

UNLOCKING WONDERLAND AND SPACE ZONE

Golden Keys

The Golden Keys will be granted to you periodically as you progress through your theme parks (You will be granted one every time you receive three of the elusive golden tickets).

These are necessary to unlock the later two theme worlds: Wonderland (requires 3 keys) and the Space Zone (requires 5 keys). The bigger and better your theme parks are the more keys you get. So reach for the skies.

Go for big rides, big profits, and fast research, and you'll cram in as many visitors as physically possible.

You'll be rolling in dough before you know it.



WONDERLAND A place to make Alice feel at home.



SPACE ZONE Only available to space cadets.



I FEEL SICK With rides like this you'll need janitors.

waste of research and money, but don't forget that they cheer people up and make their days slightly brighter. And, after all, isn't that what they have paid your extortionate ticket prices for? If your visitors feel happy they will stay in your park much longer than if they feel ripped off. Visitors in the park mean money in your bank account, so....

Employees

Now you have the basics in place it is time to consider employing a team of hard-working and talented individuals. There are five professions needed to keep your park working: janitors, mechanics, entertainers, guards, and researchers.

JANITORS

Janitors clean the paths and bathrooms, pick up the litter, and, most importantly, mop up the oceans of vomit that your visitors will regurgitate.

Make sure you have plenty of these enthusiastic and uncomplaining employees. They don't cost much and it is well worth having armies of them or your visitors will quickly start complaining about having to wander about among the filth that they have generated.

MECHANICS

Mechanics are extremely useful to your theme park. They maintain the rides and perform any upgrades you have managed to research and pay for.

You will probably want about one for every two rides or so. And don't forget to hire more as you develop more rides.

ENTERTAINERS

If your lines are getting long for your rides then people will begin to get annoyed. You can see this by the little mood bubble next to them (an hourglass with a thumbs-down). To alleviate this you can employ entertainers.

These hardy individuals will don a ridiculous costume and prance about in front of your jaded visitors until they admit they're happy just to get him to go away.

Dedicate entertainers' patrol areas to particularly long lines but don't forget to move them on when the ride becomes older and less popular.

There is nothing that depresses your bubbly entertainer more than fooling around in front of an empty line.



FRANKIE GOES TO HOLLYWOOD This guy will stop those pesky kids complaining, or else ...

GUARDS

Your security guards are responsible for keeping pranksters under control. Parks like yours are havens for brats with stink bombs and a penchant for popping everyone else's balloons.

To make the guard's lives easier you can install security cameras to watch over large areas of your park. Cameras don't need rest and can see much farther than guards, so they help a lot.

RESEARCHERS

Researchers are essential to the growth of your park. Employ at least one and let him rove around your park with his clipboard.

These guys are expensive so be careful not to employ more than you can afford.

On the other hand, the more of them you have the quicker you will discover new stuff to attract people to your park. In general it's best to find a good balance and stick to it.

SIM THEME PARK continued on page 172 >>

SO, YOU CAN FIX A ROLLER COASTER, CAN'T YOU?

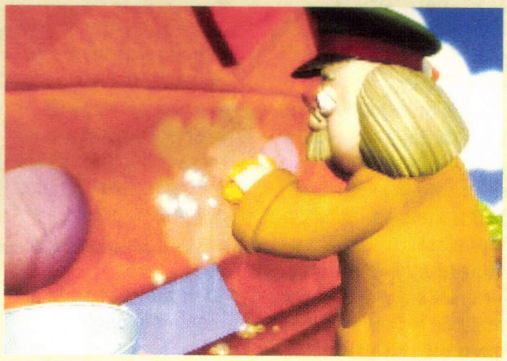
Staff Competency

When hiring staff you will find that they have varying degrees of competence, and the more competent they are the more expensive they become to employ.

To get anyone more than about 60 percent competent you will have to train them. As a rule it is worth employing the best people you can find.

Train them as well and you can put together a really good team. In the later theme parks you may find that you have the opportunity to employ unskilled staff. These people are a little cheaper than those with about 20 percent competence, but should be avoided at all cost. It is a much better idea just to wait for someone more capable to turn up.

If you must employ imbeciles then make sure you are putting some good money into staff training and get them some know-how as soon as possible. But, in the long run, you shouldn't hire more.



MR. CLEAN Keep your park clean and your visitors happy. This guy's moustache is thicker than his scrub brush.

SIM THEME PARK TIPS

Staff Costs Table

Janitors	
Skill Level	
$50	20%
$60	40%
$80	60%
Mechanics	
Skill Level	
$150	20%
$180	40%
$240	60%
Entertainers	
Skill Level	
$75	20%
$90	40%
$120	60%
Guards	
Skill Level	
$100	20%
$120	40%
$160	60%
Researchers	
Skill Level	
$175	20%
$210	40%
$280	60%

If you want to employ staff with higher skill levels then you will have to train them yourself.

SIM THEME PARK TIPS

Food and Drink

Shops selling food and drinks will make you large amounts of money, but be careful not to place them too close to the entrances of major rides. A lot of rides will make people ill at the best of times and filling their stomachs beforehand is just asking for trouble. If you do end up with this problem then it is often worth dedicating a janitor's patrol area to the exits of these rides.

GREASY BURGERS

Sooner or later you will get the opportunity to install burger shops. These, like all shops will bring the cash rolling in. But you should be careful of the fat level they contain. Low fat levels mean less profit but high fat levels will make your visitors queasy, especially if they immediately go on a nauseating ride.

DEHYDRATION

When your visitors are not being sick they will usually be thirsty. These complaints can be turned into cash by placing drinks shops at every corner.

» SIM THEME PARK continued from page 171

Get to Work

Once you have your crew, you need to put them to work. It is a good idea to give your staff patrol routes. In this way you can ensure that there will always be someone nearby in case of an emergency.

It is an equally good idea to have a few people who are free to roam the park. These individuals can pick up any slack that is missed by the others when they are already busy or if they have gone off to the staff room.

Stop Slacking

Staff rooms are important to your staff and they will insist that you let them go and sit down for a while.

To prevent these slackers from taking too much time off it is helpful to put staff rooms throughout the park so that they don't have too far to travel. Then they can be back at work in no time and actually earning their pay.

Let's go Shopping

Saturate your park with all kinds of shops. People will buy anything on impulse (provided that they are enjoying themselves) and it is all profit. Besides, if you don't then they will probably complain about being thirsty.

Just remember that your visitors will throw empty cartons and wrappers on the floor unless you provide a plethora of trash cans. Be nice to your hard-working janitors.

Changing the Recipie

You can also adjust the amount of ice in your drinks. More ice means less drink means more profit. Sadly, some people notice this kind of behavior so watch the local happiness rating as you toy with the ice levels.



ICE CREAMS AND BURGERS No army ever marched on an empty stomach. Especially not an army of kids.

Again, the local happiness will vary anyway so it is difficult to work out whether they are happy or not. What's more, on hotter days visitors prefer more ice so adjusting this to perfection is a futile task. In later levels it becomes more necessary to get these details right.

Souvenirs

Eventually you will get the opportunity to build balloon shops and costume shops. As with all shops these are great for raking in the green stuff.

Place them at the exits to popular rides and when people leave the ride, having enjoyed themselves immensely, they can immediately buy themselves a silly costume as a souvenir of their experience (after they have finished being sick, of course).

These two shops also provide an indicator as to people's happiness. If lots of people are buying balloons, then they are really happy, and if lots of people are buying costumes, then they have liked most of the rides they have been on. Keep an eye on these shops.



FOOD COURT Plazas help keep things tidy.

BEING TAKEN FOR A RIDE

First Person Tours

Having a go on your own rides is great fun, especially with the fancy attractions like roller coasters, log flumes and aerial tours.

When you are high up you get the opportunity to view your entire park from a whole new angle, and riding the coasters and flumes is half the reason for building them, after all. Just remember that whilst you are out enjoying yourself everything else is still going on. Don't waste all of your time fooling about on the rides or you'll soon find that you've gone bankrupt. There is nothing quite like the poor house to royally harsh a good roller coaster buzz.



SLOW CLIMB It may seem fine at first...



SUDDEN DROP ...But things soon speed up!



THIRSTY WORK After all that excitement a refreshing drink is just the ticket. Where's the beer stand?



MAKING MONEY Sideshows like this sliding puzzle will bring in a little extra cash if managed properly.



MAKE A FORTUNE Some lucky visitors will recieve a prize for having their fortunes told!

All-weather Rides

Periodically, the weather will turn miserable and you will see rain or snow turning your beautiful pathways into swamps.

When this happens your fickle visitors will be much more inclined to visit your indoor attractions rather than your expensive roller coasters (for obvious reasons). So make sure that you have plenty of these types of rides strewn liberally about your theme park.

Then visitors will all be dry and happy when the sun comes out again.

Sideshows

Sideshows are your third source of income (after your ticket sales and shops). Your visitors will want to explore these distractions in between risking life and limb on the bigger rides.

Keep an eye on the progress of these games and monitor their popularity and profit-making capabilities. If either of these falls off to nothing, then you can improve their appeal by modifying the chance of winning, the value of the prizes, or the cost per game.

If you find you can't give the prizes away then it may be time to scrap the entire thing and find something a bit more entertaining to put in its place.

Tracks, Coasters and Flumes!

As you advance, you will get the opportunity to include bigger, more exciting rides in your park.



WATER WORKS What could be nicer than a gentle dip?

Track Rides

Track rides are large and will require more planning than any other ride, including the roller coasters.

Both Go-kart tracks and water tracks fall into this category. Each section of track takes up as much room as four squares of pathway. When building these, put in several crossroads to liven things up.

Also try to include straightaways because later on you will be able to develop upgrades such as jumps and tunnels which can only be placed on straight areas of the track. You can also cross paths with

SIM THEME PARK continued on page 174 >>



HALLOWEEN A park with a grave sense of humour!

HALLOWEEN WORLD: RIDE SUMMARY

Name	Cost	Type
Brain Buster	$500	Bouncy Castle
Crypt Karts	$4,000	Go-kart Track
Devils Disc	$2,500	Centrifuge
Flightmare Tours	$5,000 or 1 gold ticket	Aerial Tour Ride
Ghost Ship	$2,750	Pirate Ship
Ghosta Coasta	$10,000	Roller Coaster
Hades	$10,000	Log Flume
Hocus Pocus	$1,250	Spinning Ride
Insecticide	$750	Spinning Ride
Jaw Dropper	$2,000	Vertical Drop
Ooze Crooz	$5,000	Water Track
Phantom	$2,000	Simulator
Pumpkin Castle	$1,500	Bumper Cars
Putrid Pumpkins	$1,500	Spinning Ride
Rat Race	$1,200	Merry-Go-Round
Scatty Batty	$12,500	Roller Coaster
Spooky Spider	$2,750 or 3 gold tickets	Big Wheel
Tentacle Terror	$1,750	Fixed Coaster
The Firepit	$2,500	Spinning Ride

SIM THEME PARK TIPS

Rearranging the Scenary

Don't be afraid to move items that you have already placed in the park if you need room to install your latest creation. Just pick 'em up and shuffle 'em about. This goes for scenery as well as rides. Do be careful though, every time you pick up an item and move it you will be charged some of your precious money. So make sure you know where you want it before you move it.

Don't Go Mad!

Don't go around building everything in sight. If you do this, you will quickly run out of cash. Instead decide what features you want and where you want them and then you can direct your research in the directions you require. Only build rides you can afford.

Big Brother

Security Cameras help the guards do their job. They also don't ask for breaks and can see further. Place these things throughout your theme park, at the end of long paths and other easily covered areas.

SIM THEME PARK TIPS

Advanced Parks
In later levels you will find that you have access to a roller coaster from the word "go." It is very tempting just to whack this into place immediately but these babies require a lot of money to install and need a crowd of customers before they will make your money back. So be very careful when considering it and make sure that your park can cope.

Missing The Action
But be careful when you are busy building tracks for your bigger rides. Whilst you are engrossed with getting that roller coaster out of a knot the rest of your park is still moving and if you are not careful you may miss some important messages.

Upgrades
Don't forget to upgrade your rides every time your research comes up with a new modification. Upgrades can make a ride more reliable and more interesting, bringing life back to a failing attraction.



IS THIS SAFE? When you have enough money you can build some quite extensive roller coasters.

» SIM THEME PARK continued from page 173

tracks, making entertaining bridges yet still allowing access to areas of the park beyond the track ride.

Coasters And Flumes
Roller coasters and log flumes are the biggest crowd pullers at any theme park and people will travel farther to experience them than any other attraction. To capitalize on this you will want to establish them towards the back of your park so that your visitors will have the opportunity to visit all of your other attractions before they get to the biggie.

They are also large rides and require lots of pylons to carry them, so they are best secreted around the edges for aesthetic reasons as well.

It is possible to build other features within the pylons of the roller coaster but they are generally obscured and difficult to reach, so only do it if you need the space.

Building Your Roller Coaster
Roller coasters and log flumes are more thrilling than track rides and easier to plan for. Although they take up more space, most of that is in the air and you only need to account for the original station and the pylons. Building these things is somewhat of an art. Including fast curves, spirals, ups and downs, and loops will make the rides much more intense and exciting, but will also make people nauseous and even scare some away. It is simply a matter of playing with your rides and seeing what works best.



ITS A BIT HIGH You'll be rewarded for high coasters.



ARG! RUN! High coasters are the most popular rides.

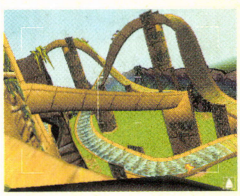
Try to avoid making rides too long or you will have lines stretching back for miles. But if you make them too short, people will be unimpressed.



THAT IS JUST WATER, RIGHT? Log Flumes are slower than Roller Coasters, but still draw in the crowds.

Also, you can get a bonus golden ticket if you build one of these babies high enough. With anything but the tamest of coasters you will undoubtedly need a janitor patrolling the exit path.

When building roller



KNOT BAD You can still have fun with flumes with enough curves and dips.

THE LOST KINGDOM: RIDE SUMMARY

Name	Cost	Type
Aztec Mayhem	$2,500	Simulator
Belly Bounce	$500	Bouncy Castle
Chac Atak	$10,000	Log Flume
Crazy Ape	$2,000	Pirate Ship
Dinokarts	$6,500	Go-kart Track
Eruption	$2,500 or 3 gold tickets	Vertical Lift
Gorilla Thrilla	$12,500	Roller Coaster
Inca Totem	$3,250	Vertical Drop
Jurassic Tours	$3,000 or 1 gold ticket	Aerial Tour Ride
Mayan Spinner	$750	Spinning Ride
Mumbo	$1,000	Merry-Go-Round
Rocky Racers	$750	Merry-Go-Round
Splish Splash	$5,000	Water Track
Sun God	$1,500	Big Wheel
Temple of Gloom	$10,000	Roller Coaster
The Hot Pot	$2,000	Bumper Cars
Tom Tom Twister	$4,000	Spinning Ride



OFF THE RAILS Coasters can wind all over the park.



I'M SO DIZZY Spirals, dips, and loops make anyone ill.

coasters, try to avoid using pull chains at any point other than right at the beginning. They are slow and a whole bunch of no fun. You should be able to develop the entire ride to run off the momentum of the initial drop. Remember that log flumes aren't as fast as roller coasters, so adjust their lengths accordingly.

They also don't go uphill so well (something to do with the properties of water, apparently), but they can come down with quite a splash. Flumes are less exciting but they do have water so that's all right.

Money Matters

No one likes going broke, so keep track of your bank balance (at the top left of the screen). You won't get far if you run out, so spend it wisely and carefully. Build gradually and slowly push up your gate cost while you develop the more attractive rides and get the funds for further advancement from all your visitors. If you build everything at once then you will lose a lot of cash while visitors dribble into your park at the beginning.

Your balance will change color to give you a clue when you should be worrying. It gets progressively darker once below $4,000, until it finally turns red when you reach $0.

At this point you have six months to make some money or you will be declared bankrupt, spelling the end for your wonderful theme park. And we don't want that now, do we?

Basically the watch words here are develop your park slowly.

Generating Funds

So how do we make money? Clicking on the gate to your park allows you to change your ticket prices.

You may be advised from time to time that your gate price is too cheap. It is always good practice to keep pushing your door price up every time you build a couple of rides or so; your park is more interesting so visitors will pay more to get in. If you only put the ticket price up when prompted, you will quickly find yourself in the red.

But don't get too eager to charge, either. If you put the price too high then fewer visitors will come to your park and those that do will be less happy when they get there. Trust your advisors.



MONEY PROBLEMS? When your piggy bank is empty, you can get some cash from these nice people.



GET YOUR TICKETS HERE! The gateway is where you control ticket prices.

Crawling to the Bank

There may come a time when you find yourself a little short of cash, generally after building everything in sight, employing the population of a small country, and constructing a roller coaster from coast to coast. Now is the time that all these smiling people approach you with "generous loans."

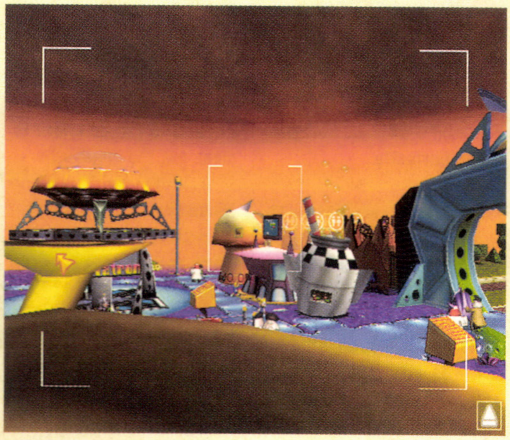
If you do have to take out a loan then try not to leave it outstanding for too long because it will eat all your profits as you pay off the intrest.

SIM THEME PARK continued on page 176 >>

CHALLANGING TIMES AHEAD

Challenges

Occasionally you will be offered challenges (a small trophy icon will appear on the control panel). These provide opportunities for a lump sum of cash if you can reach the stated goal in time. The goals include such things as selling so many balloons or making a certain amount of money from sideshows. These are usually quite easy to achieve and so are well worth taking up. There is no penalty for failure so you have nothing to lose.



IN SPACE NO-ONE EATS ICE-CREAM Can you sell enough to earn that extra cash bonus?

SIM THEME PARK TIPS

Meeting The Challenge

Some challenges will ask you to sell a certain amount of a given product within a time limit. You can improve your chances of achieving this by building more of the necessary shops. If that is not enough then try reducing the prices at those shops by about $10-15. If that won't make them come running then nothing will.

Sick To Death

If you see a mess that isn't being attended to then you can just hire a new janitor and drop him at the appropriate place. Once he has mopped up then sack him again (unless you can afford to keep him on, of course). This is a neat way to hire temps.

Look At The Size Of That Thing!

Some of the scenery can get quite large, bigger than some rides even. You may think that these things are a waste of space, but remember that they will cheer up your visitors immensely.

SIM THEME PARK TIPS

Loopy

By the time you get the option to include loops the ride will already be in place. So adding a loop will require a bit of reorganising of the track. You can prepare for this by making sure that your original coaster design includes an appropriate area that you can just rip up later.

Reorganizing A Ride

You have probably noticed that when you re-route a queue line or redesign a track, the ride will have to be closed down for a while. To avoid frustrating your visitors with "work in progress" signs you can make these modifications while the ride is being repaired.

Where Am I?

It is important to make sure that all of your paths provide a means to reach the entrance to your park. Don't build separate paths linking the exit of one ride to the entrance of the next.



VOLCANO'S BROKEN Nothing works perfectly.



PROBLEMS Err, do I have to clean out the elephant?

» **SIM THEME PARK** continued from page 175

Make sure that you use the money to build something that will pay for itself quickly and then pay the loan off as soon as possible. If you are prepared to wait a little then a better way to raise cash is to up the price of your tickets. Remember that if you stay in the red for more than six months you will be declared bankrupt. This is very undesirable so make sure you take out a loan instead. That will give you the breathing space you need to get things back on track.



" I'LL TAKE THE BOX" Mystery Rides are cool.

Maintenance and Modifications

Each major ride has a "state of repair" rating and you would be well advised to stay aware of when it falls into the red. When this happens you can often see white smoke billowing out of the seams (not to be confused with steam from your restaurants).

To help you out, sometimes you will receive a message on your radio when a ride gets too dilapidated. This is the time to send in those Mechanics you spent so much money on. They will close the ride for a short while and fix it right up for you.

With most of the attractions you can tinker with the cost, prize, duration, capacity, and the like. These adjustments allow you to fine-tune your attractions to get the most out of them. But as a rule you will probably find that it makes so little difference as to be not worth the effort.

It is simpler just to whack up the rides and other attractions and only fiddle with them if there is a problem (such as no customers or no profits).



COME ON, EINSTEIN! IT'S NOT ROCKET SCIENCE! Research will keep your park from lingering in the stone age.

Research

Research is very important if you want to have more in your park than just some half-deflated bouncy castle. You will have to hire some researchers (the most expensive of your staff—that's a university education for you) and allow them to wander about your park talking to your visitors. The more you have, the faster your research will get done, but don't end up spending all of your profits on paying these guys.

The Research Screen

On the research screen you will want to adjust the sliders so that your research will progress in all five areas. Your employees are researching an area when there is green goo in the appropriate cylinder. The faster the bubbles are moving through the goo, the faster they are doing your research.

On the left is another slider (vertical this time) with a face next to it. As you slide this up and down the expression on the face changes. This indicates how hard you are working these eggheads.

As with all staff, if you push them too far they will strike and call you names. Adjust the work slider to just before the face begins to growl and you should find that this provides a good level of progress (provided

Wonderland - Ride Summary

Name	Cost	Type
Big Dripper	$10,000	Log Flume
Bugs TV	$1,250	Simulator
Bumble Buggies	$6,500	Go-kart Track
Bumper Bugs	$2,000	Bumper Cars
Candy Coaster	$12,500	Roller Coaster
Caterpillar Capers	$1,000	Fixed Coaster
Caterpillar Coaster	$10,000	Roller Coaster
Dragon Fliers	$2,000 or 4 gold tickets	Merry-Go-Round
Flamingo Fling	$750	Spinning Ride
Flower Power	$1,500	Centrifuge
Jelly Bounce	$500	Bouncy Castle
Spore Spinner	$1,750	Big Wheel
Taptastic Rapids	$5,000	Water Track
Tweety Tours	$3,000 or 2 gold tickets	Aerial Tour Ride
Well Drop	$1,750	Vertical Drop
Woodland Racers	$1,500	Merry-Go-Round

you are employing enough researchers).

If you desperately need to develop a particular piece of hardware you can push all your efforts in that direction. Reduce all other research to zero and max out the category you are want. Then push the work bar up to the top. Your researchers will go nuts to produce the item you want.

But don't forget to change things back once you have what you want or things will go haywire.

Specific Research

It is worth noting that you can also direct your research to a particular discovery within a group—so if you really want that costume shop or you find yourself in desperate need of a roller coaster then you can cook one up in no time.

Don't neglect research on scenery. Not only does it cheer people up but this category also includes super bathrooms that can come in very handy.

Expansion

Don't be afraid to buy land if you need it. It comes cheap and is obviously very useful. It is very annoying to build a roller coaster in the corner of your park only to find that it is also the corner of the map and that you don't have enough room to expand.

As you build new rides and expand your borders you may find that older rides become less popular. Rides that once had lines back to the gate will only have one or two customers. This is a good opportunity to trim back those lines, freeing up a lot of space for sideshows, shops, or scenery.

Obviously, if there are no customers for a ride then you might want to consider replacing it, or at least upgrading it.

As your theme park grows remember to keep putting in bathroom blocks every now and again. Your visitors don't have to want to have to walk back to the park gate every time they feel the call of nature.

JUST THE (GOLDEN) TICKET

Golden Tickets

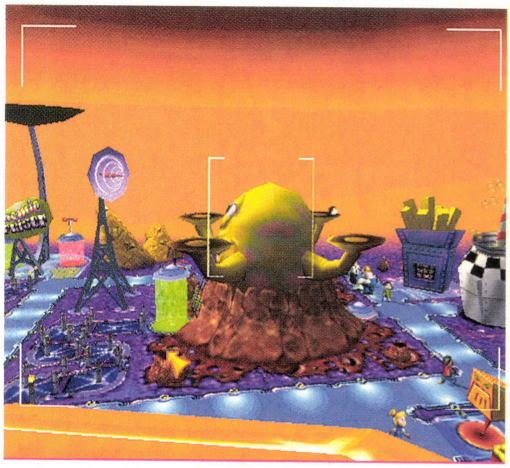
These are granted every time you achieve certain goals for any given theme park. Once earned they will allow you to purchase special rides. Each theme park has a couple of such bonus attractions.

Here are a few of the ways to earn golden tickets in the first two theme worlds (the later two theme worlds get progressively harder to earn those precious golden tickets).

- Attracting over 100 visitors to your park.
- Generating a high level of visitor happiness (This can be monitored using the information panel).
- Having 200 visitors in your theme park at one time.
- Entertaining 350 visitors within 6 months.
- Exceeding $15,000 profit in a year.
- Building a really high roller coaster.



GOLD DUST Collect Golden Tickets for Mystery Rides.



SPACE: THE FINAL FRONTIER The Space Zone is the last theme world. And the hardest to make successful.

SPACE ZONE: RIDE SUMMARY

Name	Cost	Type
Crater Creature	$1,500	Spinning Ride
Cosmic Bounce	$500	Bouncy Castle
Cosmic Cruiser	$3,000 or 2 Gold Tickets	Aerial Tour Ride
Cyclone Station	$1,250 or 3 Gold Tickets	Vertical Lift
Escape Velocity	$12,500	Roller Coaster
Hover Bot Havoc	$1,750	Spinning Ride
Missile Madness	$2,500	Spinning Ride
Moon Buggies	$750	Merry-Go-Round
Moon Shot	$10,000	Roller Coaster
Rock'n Roll!	$2,500	Simulator
Space Balls	$750	Slide
Space Racers	$6,500	Go Kart Track
Shocker	$12,500	Roller Coaster
The Aerotron	$2,000 or 5 Gold Tickets	Big Wheel
The Blobulator	$5,000	Water Track
The Gravatron	$2,500	Cetrifuge
The Orbitor	$2,000	Fixed Coaster
Tubes of Zob	$3,000	Vertical Lift
Uforia	$2,000	Bumper Cars
Zero G	$2,500	Anti Gravity Chamber

SIM THEME PARK TIPS

"That Was Great!"

When visitors come out of a ride a good percentage of them will generally be delirious with happiness. While they are so euphoric you have the opportunity to sell them virtually anything. Place balloon or costume shops around exits and watch the money come rolling in.

Indigenous Igneous Obstacles

Rocks are found in all four parks. Take these annoyances into account when planning your theme park. This is especially true for the Space Zone.

Carny Cheating

If your in need of a lot of money and have absolutely no morals you can con some poor sucker for a fortune. Pick a sideshow that someone is using and, before they finish, ramp the price up to $10,000. They will cough up and go on their way.

Going For Gold

Repeat the above idea but put four sideshows next to each other so you can adjust them all easily. Then put your gate price to $0 to get them all in, set your prizes to $10 but with a maximum possibility to win. They stay happy, play more and you fleece them every time. Everyone's a winner.

Football 2K!

We Decided That We Didn't Like the Way the Real Football Season Was Turning Out, So We Simulated a New One



ILLUSTRATION BY BOB ROBINSON

Reality's a bitch for sure: your favorite QB has more concussions than TDs and for some reason Randall Cunningham forgot how to throw a football.

Tired of a football season that looks like the butt of one of reality's cruel jokes, we decided to toss that very same reality out the window and go all digital. We had *Madden 2000's* AI play an entire season to see who'd be clocking rings. We then put Cyber Howie, Cyber Terry Bradshaw, Cyber Steve Young, and Fox's virtual JB in a room to discuss EA's "virtual" season. The Packers were Super Bowl champs, having beaten the Patriots 23 to 17, and this is what our boys had to say about this season.

JB: Before we get to the Super Bowl fellas, tell us what you thought of the season as a whole.

Cyber Terry Bradshaw: The Super Bowl? I want to know how the Chargers ended up being 7-0 after eight weeks. This *is* virtual reality.

Cyber Howie: I gotta agree with Terry on that one. Anyway, I wasn't at all surprised to see that the Pats had the best record in the NFL with 13-3. But the Elway-less Broncos going 12-4? Give me a break!

Cyber Steve: Has anyone seen my mittens?

JB: Any other surprises for you guys this season?

Cyber Terry Bradshaw: The Bucs! I love Trent Dilfer! Even if it is just the virtual Trent I was happy to see him make it into the post season.

Cyber Steve: My head hurts.

Cyber Howie: *Madden* got half of it right with the Jags, Rams, and Cowboys making it, but the Jets, Broncos, and Packers? John Woo couldn't write anything that crazy.

Cyber Terry Bradshaw: At least with the Packers beating the Pats in the Super Bowl 23-17 we won't have to see Brett Fahvre crying on the sideline for a while.

Cyber Steve: Grandpa? Is that you Grandpa?

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